

## Libya denies U.S. slavery charge

CAIRO (AP) — Libya charges that the United States is trying to undermine Libya's good name by accusing it of receiving women and children abducted from southern Sudan as slaves. The official news agency JANA quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying he was "astonished and amazed" that Libya was implicated in such a report. "This false accusation against Libya wants to harm the reputation of the Great Jamahiriya (Libya) and destroy its image in the world," the official said. The charge was in a document compiled by the U.S. embassy in Sudan and released in Washington. It accused forces of Sudan's fundamentalist government of routinely abducting women and children in the south and sending them to work as forced labour in farms inside Sudan or in neighbouring Libya. Reports of slavery have circulated for years as Sudan fought a 10-year-old civil war (Khartoum rejects summit, page 2). The U.S. diplomatic report was the first mention that southerners were exported as slaves to Libya. "The Libyan Arab people... who have promoted workers to become partners because workers no matter how well-paid will always remain slaves, strongly reject these false claims," the official said.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي

## Riyadh refutes Libyan charges

RIYADH (AP) — Saudi Arabia Friday refuted Libyan claims that it was obstructing the flow of Libyan pilgrims to Islam's holiest shrines at Mecca and Medina. The official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) quoted an unnamed official source as saying hundreds of Libyans already have arrived in the kingdom via third countries. The official source, which in Saudi Arabia is the equivalent of a government spokesman, said 5,520 Libyans have been granted visas for this year's Hajj rituals, which climax at the end of this month. The Libyan parliament Monday appealed to King Fahd to ignore the international sanctions imposed against the Tripoli government and let Libyans fly their country's aircraft to Mecca. Libya made similar appeals to other Muslim countries and to the 51-member, Jeddah-based Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in a bid to wedge a crack in 13-month-old sanctions imposed against Tripoli. According to the Libyan news agency, the General People's Congress told King Fahd in a telegram Monday that "subjecting the holy places to political vacillations contradicts the wishes of God." Responding to the Libyan telegram, the Saudi source said the kingdom was not responsible for arranging the pilgrims' transportation to the kingdom.

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## Iraq drills oil well with 5,600 bpd output

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraqi engineers have drilled an oil well in the southern province of Najaf, yielding 5,600 barrels per day of crude, the official weekly, Alef Ba, reported Friday. "A fountain of black gold gushed out amid the golden sand of Najaf desert," the magazine said. "Iraqi explorers drilled three oil wells, one of them has a production capacity of 5,600 bpd," Alef Ba said. No other details were available. U.N. trade sanctions imposed soon after the 1990 Gulf crisis bar Iraqi exports including its lifeblood oil. But Iraq, with the world's second largest oil reserves after Saudi Arabia, is pressing ahead with exploration. Oil officials say they have launched a drilling and exploration campaign in areas untapped before. They say the main area is the desert stretching from the outskirts of Baghdad to Jordan in the west.

## British MPs visit Shiite marshlands

BAGHDAD (R) — Two left-wing members of parliament (MPs) from Britain went on a fact-finding tour of the Shiite Muslim marshlands of southern Iraq Friday. The area is within the "no-fly" zone imposed last year by the United States, Britain and France with the declared aim of protecting Shiite dissidents from attack by Iraqi aircraft. George Galloway and Tam Dalyell, from the opposition Labour Party, arrived in Iraq Wednesday to explore the effect of U.N. trade sanctions and tour the southern marshes. The deputies, outspoken opponents of Britain's participation in the 1991 Gulf war to oust Iraq from Kuwait, are the first British MPs to visit government-controlled areas of Iraq since the conflict.

## 4 beheaded in Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (AP) — Four Pakistanis were beheaded Friday for smuggling drugs into Saudi Arabia, the Interior Ministry announced. The four were identified as Amin Al Rahman Bagh Mohammad, who was beheaded in Jeddah, and Abdul Qayoum Saeed Rahman, Gholam Hussein Haji Khan and Nader Khan Shahzad who were beheaded in Riyadh. About 70 people have been executed for drug smuggling, most of them Pakistanis.

## Teresa hospitalised with broken ribs

ROME (AP) — Mother Teresa, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 for her work with the poor and sick, has been hospitalised with three ribs after she tripped while going to chapel, her doctor said Friday. "She's well," said Dr. Vincenzo Bilotta, "but suffering from pain." The cardiologist and geriatrics specialist said he had visited his patient Friday morning in a Rome hospital. "She's been in the hospital since yesterday (Thursday) morning. She fell going to chapel," Mr. Bilotta said. She had been staying at a convent on the outskirts of Rome, one of the convents for her nuns which operate in 95 countries. "She tripped. You know those shoes, those sandals she wears," Dr. Bilotta added. "Given her conditions of health, it could be a serious thing," Dr. Bilotta added about the frail, 82-year-old nun.

## 'N. Korea may have nuclear arms in 1994'

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea will be capable of developing two or three nuclear weapons as soon as next year if its nuclear weapons development programme is not halted, South Korea's intelligence agency has quoted as saying Friday. Yonhap news agency quoted the National Security Planning Agency (NSPA) as saying in a report to parliament that Pyongyang would be able to develop two or three nuclear bombs by 1994 or 1995 unless its nuclear development programme was stopped immediately. The report came two days after the U.N. Security Council adopted a resolution urging Pyongyang to rescind its March 12 announcement it was pulling out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to allow special inspections of two previously undeclared sites suspected of holding weapons-grade plutonium.

# Jordan reports no progress in talks

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Jordan has said it did not believe it could make progress in peace talks with Israel unless other Arabs, particularly the Palestinians, also moved forward. Chief Jordanian negotiator Abdul Salam Majali told a news conference Thursday at the end of a three-week session of talks: "Peace should be comprehensive and for all the parties concerned. So we cannot see that we are running when other tracks are still slow in their motion."

He said Jordan had seen positive signs early in the round and so had agreed to set up working groups with Israel to discuss details of a peace agreement. The groups cover subjects such as borders, water, energy, the environment, refugees, banking and tourism.

But Dr. Majali said the early signs "did not materialise up to this minute into real progress on the Palestinian-Israeli track."

"Once these signals are translated into a proper action, especially in the field, and the other tracks will move forward, Jordan will be ready to move forward," he said. The ninth round of peace talks began on a hopeful note but ended with Arab and Israeli disappointment. Even unprecedented U.S. intervention, in the form of a proposal to bridge the gaps between Israelis and Palestinians on a joint declaration about their talks, failed to overcome the impasse. "It is disconcerting and embar-



Haidar Abdul Shafi, chief Palestinian delegate to Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, Thursday talks to the press in Washington as Syrian negotiator Mouaffak Al Arafat (right) looks on (AFP photo)

assing to tell you again that we have made no progress," Palestinian delegation head Haidar Abdul Shafi said Thursday (see separate story). "After 18 months, we are where we were after the first several rounds," said chief Syrian negotiator Muwaffaq Al Arafat. Nonetheless, all sides indicated they would return to the table for more talks — possibly around June 7.

The talks resumed three weeks ago after a four-month break amid heightened hopes for progress, after Israel promised it would make concessions to the Palestinians. The United States also played a far more active role in this round of talks than in any previous one since the Mideast talks were convened by the Bush administration in Oct. 1991. But both the Palestinians and Syrians indicated

progress was made, he said the crux of the Israeli-Syrian dispute remained unsolved.

Syria wants Israel to commit to full withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for a peace agreement. Israel insists on first hearing what Syria means by full peace, before it will discuss what it means by withdrawal.

Israel appealed to the United States to help break the deadlock in its negotiations with Syria. The Syrians have been demanding for some time that the United States, which has promised to play the role of "full partner" in the peace process, should intervene. But the Israelis resisted the idea.

However, Mr. Rabinovich, told a news conference on Thursday: "We feel comfortable with the role of the full partner and we would feel comfortable if the full partner enters the scene in order to try and move this negotiation forward."

Mr. Arafat of Syria told a news conference: "Israel has not answered that very important question, full withdrawal for full peace. And I do not think there is any possibility to establish peace before an answer from the Israelis committing themselves to that equation."

Mr. Rabinovich said: "The Syrian attempt to break this logjam open by introducing the formula of full peace for full withdrawal doesn't quite do the trick because, frankly, full peace is no

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# Palestinians reject American proposal

TUNIS (Agencies) — Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat will call for an emergency meeting for the Palestine Central Council (PCC) soon to discuss the logjammed Middle East peace talks, Arafat aides said Friday.

The aides, requesting anonymity, said Mr. Arafat decided to call the 80-member assembly for a meeting after Arab and Israeli negotiators ended their ninth round of talks with no breakthrough (see page 4).

The U.S.-sponsored talks went into recess in Washington on Thursday after the Palestinians rejected a compromise American document on a joint declaration of principles for a Palestinian self-rule agreement.

In a statement Friday, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) described the American proposals as a point-by-point copy of an Israeli plan offered and refused by the Palestinians last week.

The aides told the Associated Press that Mr. Arafat wants to consult with the Palestinian leaders on how to handle the slow-moving negotiations with Israel. They said Mr. Arafat was running out of patience for the lack of progress in 19-month-old process.

The PCC coordinates between the Palestine National Council, the Palestinian parliament in exile, and the 18-member Executive Committee of the PLO.

The council meeting was in-

itially set for June 6, after the four-day feast of 'Eid Al Adha, or feast of sacrifice, starting on June 1.

The U.S. proposal to bridge the gap between Israel and the Palestinians at the peace talks "represents the Israeli government view on all points," the PLO said in a memorandum addressed to the two sponsors of the peace conference, the United States and Russia, and carried by its Wafa news agency.

The Americans submitted their compromise proposal first to the Israelis and then to the Palestinians and billed it as a final attempt to bring the two sides closer together.

The PLO said that the U.S. document "ignored the status of Jerusalem and the issue of the end of the (Israeli) occupation" and contradicted guarantees made by Russia and the United States at the start of the peace talks in 1991.

U.S. President George Bush said when the talks started that they would be based on the principle of exchanging land for peace.

The PLO also asked the United States to hold immediate consultations with Israeli and Palestinian peace negotiators in an effort to secure a "declaration of principle that could serve in the near future as the basis for an agreement."

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# Lebanon probes leak of alleged Israeli proposal

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon opened an inquiry Friday into an embarrassing leak of an alleged Israeli peace proposal that has forced the closure of a Beirut newspaper.

An investigating judge questioned Faisal Salma, responsible editor for the *Leftist* Al Safir, which Tuesday published what it said was a draft proposal for ending Israel's occupation of South Lebanon. It said the document was submitted to Lebanese negotiators at Middle East talks in Washington last week.

The Lebanese government described the newspaper's text as inaccurate and damaging to national security. A state prosecutor ordered Al Safir closed for a week for Wednesday.

Israel and the United States, which is mediating in the delicate

Middle East peace process, told Lebanon they objected to the principle of the text's publication. Al Safir appeared as Beirut Al Massa, a title whose rights are owned by communist leader Mohsen Ibrahim, for a second day Friday. It was the third newspaper or television ordered to close since April 29.

The suspensions caused a stir in media and political circles, igniting fears of a possible clampdown on the press which enjoys more freedom in Lebanon than in most other Arab states.

Some government ministers voiced objection to the ban order.

The press and journalists' syndicates, at a rally in support of Al Safir Thursday, threatened to strike, saying the closure was illegal and should be reversed. The leading *Al Nahar* daily

called the dispute over the ban "the battle of liberties."

Foreign Minister Faris Bouze said publishing a confidential document "undermines Lebanon's credibility and the position of Lebanese negotiators. We might have to pay the price."

Mr. Bouze said a similar investigation into the source of the leak has begun at the Foreign Ministry.

Justice Minister Bahij Tabara said the newspaper's closure was a line with Lebanese press laws. He said the state prosecutor has standing instructions to apply the law "especially when there is an incursion on state security."

Mr. Tabara added: "The (peace) negotiations file is a secret one. The press law is clear... when a secret document or letter is published then this publishing is liable" to prosecution.

Al Safir said the proposal was not a secret document and there was no evidence that printing it touched state security.

Talal Salman, Al Safir's owner and editor-in-chief, accused the government drawing the press into battle with the judiciary. "This is a political battle and they (government) will not succeed in drawing us to a battle with the judiciary which we consider a bastion of freedom and democracy," Mr. Salman added.

The government has suspended until May 20 the opposition daily *Nida'a Al Waran* and the television station International Communications Network indefinitely, for publishing and broadcasting material deemed damaging to reconciliation in Lebanon where 15 years of civil war ended in 1990.

# Refugee talks seen advancing

OSLO (R) — Three days of international talks on the plight of millions of refugees in the Middle East ended on Thursday with rare progress which could give a boost to the struggling peace process, delegates said.

"The ball has started to roll," Norwegian Tom Vraalsen told reporters. "We are now getting down to practical work."

Delegates said both Israeli and Palestinian representatives were satisfied with the final statement which touched on sensitive issues and listed specific initiatives to improve the lives of refugees.

The meeting was of the refugee working group, one of five multilateral bodies set up to support the main Arab-Israeli peace negotiations in Washington.

"The success we have achieved in Oslo represents an important milestone in the efforts of the refugee working group," Canadian Marc Perron told reporters after the talks.

"Positive results in one working group is positive for the peace process," he added.

On Thursday delegates left the hall for behind-the-scenes meetings to try to settle differences over the wording of a final statement.

Palestinians wanted the statement to mention their "right of return" as laid down in a U.N. resolution which Israel rejects. The final statement was a compromise. It said some delegates believed the working group should build upon "existing U.N. resolutions regarding Palestinian refugees," while others asserted it should avoid becoming a "political arena."

Palestinians also wanted a mission led by French diplomat Bernard Badolet to continue to look into the reunification of divided families in the Middle East, and to be allowed to make specific recommendations.

A copy of the statement obtained by Reuters said:

"The French mission will explore all aspects of family reunification and all the ideas put forward during the meeting... it will submit the results and proposals of its findings to the next meeting of the working group."

The group agreed on a mission to assess Palestinian priorities on refugee training, and agreed that a group of experts should be set up to meet on public health issues.

"The refugee problem is the core of the Palestinian problem," Palestinian coordinator Abu Ala said, adding that there had been serious talks rather than dancing around issues.

# S. Arabia cracks down on human rights group

NICOSIA (AFP) — The Saudi government's crackdown on human rights activists is the latest confrontation with an opposition that has stepped up calls for reform since the Gulf war.

Riyadh on Thursday barred two lawyers from practising and dismissed four university professors and a civil servant after the seven formed a group to fight "oppression and injustice" in Saudi Arabia.

The group's Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights also sought to secure the release of what it said were political prisoners in Saudi Arabia and push for political change.

The creation of the group culminated two years of criticism of government policy by the opposition whose calls for reform in a country which has no written constitution have generally been ignored, political analysts in the region said.

The calls increased after the Gulf war when a U.S.-led coalition of 30 countries mounted an offensive from Saudi Arabia that drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

The king, who rules in accordance with Islamic law, has since pledged repeatedly to push ahead with reforms but warned they would not follow Western examples.

In March 1992, the king announced he would appoint a 60-member constitutional committee within six months, but a year later the only step taken was the appointment of the justice minister as head of the council.

The Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights, which announced its formation on May 7, charged that repeated human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia demonstrated the need for a group like theirs.

The founding members of the committee are Muslim scholars known for their close links with Saudi religious figures, a status which is bound to exacerbate the concerns of the ruling family.

Committee leader Abdullah Al Masaari was a student of the current president of the powerful Assembly of Ulama, Saudi Arabia's highest religious authority.

The assembly condemned the group. It charged in a statement that there was no justification for the existence in Saudi Arabia of the committee, arguing the country was already regulated by Sharia.

Prince Salman Ben Abdul Aziz, the governor of Riyadh and brother of King Fahd, summoned the committee members a few days earlier to tell them of the royal family's anger and order them to dissolve their committee.

Two committee members, Abdullah Al Jibrin and Abdullah Al Masaari, were signatories to a critical political document addressed to King Fahd in July 1992 by 107 Saudi religious figures.

The document, entitled *Al Ishah (Advice)*, called on the authorities to free theological activity in Saudi Arabia, review laws to ensure they conform with Sharia, and abolish "torture and phone bugging."

# The choices for electoral reform

This is the second in a series of articles on the wide-ranging debate over electoral reform in Jordan. The first article appeared in the Jordan Times issue of May 13-14, 1993.

By Ayman Al Safadi  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Even though it feels targeted by the drive to change the current Election Law, the Muslim Brotherhood movement believes its losses would be the least among Jordan's political groups if and when electoral reform is introduced.

"There is no doubt that we are targeted by the talk about electoral changes," said influential Brotherhood Deputy Hammam Sa'id. "But it is a great misconception that we would be the one to lose from the change because other groups benefited from the current election law just like we did," he told the Jordan Times.

The contention that the Brotherhood's representation in the Lower House of Parliament would be reduced if the election law is changed is based on the argument that, with its unparalleled organisational structure among the country's political groups, the movement was able to use to its advantage the distribution of seats to voting districts and voters' right to have as many votes as the number of deputies in their precincts.

Advocates of this theory say that the Brotherhood gained from the high voter turn-out in its constituencies and its sup-

porters' commitment to the leadership's choice of candidates and came out from the 1989 elections with a number of seats disproportionate to the percentage of the popular vote it received.

They say that a change in the voting districts, therefore, would fragment the Brotherhood's power base and a one-man-one-vote formula would undermine the commitment of its supporters; they would have to make a choice and vote for one candidate.

That, however, would hurt others more than it would the Brotherhood, according to Dr. Sa'id.

"If the voting districts are redrawn, the Brotherhood is the most capable group of reorganising in accordance with the new division," he said pointing to famed organisational power of his movement.

And if a one-man-one-vote system was introduced without altering the voting districts, the Brotherhood would not nominate lists of candidates as it did in the 1989 election, but have one candidate in each area within the voting district to ensure the best utilisation of the votes it has.

For instance, said Dr. Sa'id, Brotherhood Deputy Ahmad Al Koufahi won about 32,000 votes in the 1989 elections, far more than the number of votes he needed to become a deputy



Hammam Sa'id

for Irbid. In the event that a one-man-one-vote system was introduced, these votes would be divided among more Brotherhood candidates to ensure that no votes are wasted.

In that case, Dr. Sa'id believes, non-Brotherhood candidates will lose more because they would not get the extra votes that supporters of the movement have and could give to them on grounds other than their political affiliation.

An extra outcome of a decision to change the voting system without the approval of the Brotherhood would attach to the movement the image of martyrs which would definitely increase its popular support, according to many Jordanian politicians and analysts.

With the perception that a new election law would be

tailored to hurt the Brotherhood so widely spread, "people would have more sympathy for us," said Dr. Sa'id.

"And if the Brotherhood is convinced that a new law is made with the purpose of hurting it, the movement would consider boycotting the elections altogether."

Spokesman of the Brotherhood bloc at the House Ibrahim Khreisat said recently that the movement would not boycott the elections even if the law was changed by issuing another temporary law. "Mr. Khreisat, however, was speaking for the time being and no final decision has been taken," Dr. Sa'id contended.

"At this stage, we are planning to contest the elections," but if developments prompt a different decision the Brotherhood would take it, he said, pointing to the decision of the Egyptian Brotherhood not to enter parliament when it felt targeted by the regime.

Such a move, Dr. Sa'id believes, will put more pressure on the regime and create dissatisfaction among the people.

"Our presence in the Lower House reduces the pressure on government," said Dr. Sa'id, attempting to allay fears that the Brotherhood might dominate the House by saying movement has no intentions of attaining a majority in the House even if it could.

Dr. Sa'id said the Brotherhood wants other sectors of

(Continued on page 10)

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## Mujahedeen of Iran claim escalated raids

NICOSTA (AP) — The main Iranian opposition group claimed Friday that it has escalated its armed operations against the Tehran regime and said 200 Revolutionary Guards have been killed or wounded in clashes this month.

The Mujahedeen-e-Khalq said in a statement that seven of their activists were killed in the attacks launched May 2-13.

The Baghdad-based organisation also claimed that in one operation eight oil pipelines around the big Abadan refinery, still under repair from damage inflicted in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, were blown up in a night-time attack May 12.

There was no independent verification of the Mujahedeen's claims and no official comment from Tehran.

But Mujahedeen spokesman Shahin Gohadi told the Associated Press by telephone: "Our operations have been very much intensified inside Iran."

"Our blows against the regime are getting heavier and deadlier. This is a new phase of our campaign to topple the regime in Tehran," he said.

According to the Mujahedeen statement, telefaxed to the AP in Cyprus, the biggest clash was near the Meyme River north-west of the town of Dehloran, 40 kilometres from the Iraqi border May 13.

The Mujahedeen said scores of Revolutionary Guards were killed or wounded in a firefight that lasted several hours. Six Mujahedeen fighters were reported slain.

In two other reported clashes around Dehloran May 12, at least 90 Revolutionary Guards were killed or wounded in two other rebel attacks. No Mujahedeen casualties were listed.

Mr. Gohadi stressed that none of the operations were mounted from Mujahedeen bases inside Iraq, but were carried out by rebel units inside the Islamic re-

public.

Still, the major clashes cited by the Mujahedeen took place in western Iran close to the frontier.

Smaller operations were also reported deep inside Iran in the central city of Isfahan, Shiraz in the south and northeast of Tehran near the Caspian Sea.

The Mujahedeen and their military arm, the National Liberation Army (NLA) of Iran are not believed to have carried out any cross-border operations from Iraq since the end of the war with Iraq in August 1988.

Iraq has kept them on a tight leash since then, apparently to avoid antagonising Tehran, which stayed neutral in the 1991 Gulf war.

Although relations with Iran have been strained in recent months, Western officials say Iran is trading with Iraq in defiance of U.N. sanctions.

Iraq is unlikely to jeopardize that vital trading link by allowing the Mujahedeen to launch attacks across the border.

Senior Mujahedeen officials said in March that the organisation planned to intensify its operations inside Iran to exploit growing discontent caused by severe economic problems and rifts within the ruling hierarchy.

Mohammad Mohaddessin, a senior aide to Mujahedeen leader Massoud Rajavi, told the AP: "This regime will soon be going and the NLA's is in a position to deliver the fatal blow."

The Mujahedeen claimed last month that they carried out 11 operations inside Iran April 8-11, killing or wounding 150 Revolutionary Guards.

They cited no losses in those operations, which were also concentrated primarily in western Iran in Ilam, Khormanshah and Khuzestan provinces.

There was no independent confirmation of those reported raids either.



Ezer Weizman inspecting army guard of honour as he officially takes office as president of Israel Thursday (AFP photo)

## Weizman sworn in as president

TEL AVIV (R) — Ezer Weizman, a former combat pilot with a sharp tongue and a passion for peace with the Arabs, became Israel's seventh president Thursday.

Mr. Weizman, 68, was sworn into the five-year ceremonial job in Israel's parliament. His uncle Chaim Weizmann was the first president at Israel's founding in 1948.

In a speech after taking the oath of office Mr. Weizman, who helped forge the Jewish state's peace with Egypt in 1979, urged Israelis not to lose hope in their quest for peace with other Arabs.

Mr. Weizman could clash with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and other Israeli leaders if he uses his position to promote such pet ideas as the return of the Golan Heights to Syria or talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

He said Israel must not be deterred by attacks on Jews or hardships in negotiating with Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinians in talks under way in Washington.

Mr. Weizman was elected in March by the 120-member parliament. He succeeds Chaim Herzog, president for a decade.

The ceremony took place hours after the latest round of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks ended without agreement on a hoped-for statement of principles for Palestinian self-rule.

"Let's not lose self-confidence," Mr. Weizman said. "This process must be clung to, until we reach the long-awaited goal."

"I hope that in our generation and perhaps during my term we'll see peace take on flesh and blood," he said.

For many Israelis Mr. Weizman personifies the image of the sassy Israeli native or "sabab" who is tough on the outside but soft on the inside.

He may be at pains to keep his mouth shut in a job that calls for hosting formal functions and representing Israel on state visits. A newspaper cartoon on Thursday depicted him with a padlock on his mouth.

He told reporters at a post-swearing-in party he would do his best not to "heaven forbid, step on government toes."

However, he added: "I don't think a president must intervene in matters only in the case of catastrophes, but he should coordinate, to understand, and to advise."

He said he could "lend a hand" to Prime Minister Rabin, whom he has known since early army days 45 years ago.

In 1989 Mr. Weizman sparked a government crisis when as science minister in a left-right unity cabinet, he faced accusations of illegal contacts with the PLO.

He never denied the charges and the crisis ended with rightist Likud Party Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir reducing Mr. Weizman's powers in cabinet.

Mr. Weizman was born in Tel Aviv in 1924 to Zionist aristocracy in what was then Palestine, under British rule.

He flew for the British in World War II and, as Israeli air force chief, built the Israeli air force.

## Khartoum opposes peace talks summit

CAIRO (AFP) — Sudan has turned down a Nigerian proposal for a four-country summit to relaunch stalled peace talks with southern rebels, the Egyptian paper Al Hayat reported here Friday as the talks were again adjourned.

It said Nigeria's onetime interior Minister Tunji Olanju, chairman of the peace talks in the Nigerian capital Abuja, had in the past two days visited Sudan, Kenya and Uganda with the suggestion that they set up a summit with Nigeria.

According to diplomatic sources quoted by the paper, the military junta in Khartoum would have been required to make concessions on security matters and the issue of enforcing Islamic law.

Unidentified Western parties were behind the idea of the summit, Al Hayat said.

The Sudanese government turned down the proposal on the grounds that it exceeded the terms of reference of the current negotiations and was intended to put pressure on the government, the paper said.

Government spokesman Ali Haj Haj complained that an attempt to settle the problem of the civil war outside the framework of direct talks was an infringement of Sudanese sovereignty and thus to be rejected, Al Hayat reported.

In Abuja, where the parley has been bogged down since April 26, both sides warned Friday that a negative reaction to Nigeria's latest mediation bid could scupper the talks for the time being, a delegate with the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) said.

Mr. Olanju's report on his mission would be decisive for what happened next.

## U.N. guards leave Iraq amid security fears

SULAYMANIYAH (AFP) — The United Nations has started withdrawing U.N. guards from northern Iraq amid a security breakdown in Kurdistan, where four aid workers have been killed since January.

The United Nations said Thursday the withdrawal of the 236 guards was to begin on Friday and continue until mid-June because it had not received funds to finance the operation.

The first batch of 50 guards were repatriated Thursday and Friday, according to a U.N. source in Baghdad.

Besides the killing of two

Kurds, a Belgian and an Australian, a hospital in Kurdistan was bombed and explosives have been placed on vehicles transporting aid to the Kurds in northern Iraq since January, aid workers said.

The four dead worked for non-governmental aid agencies, which have been operating in Iraqi Kurdistan alongside U.N. aid workers.

The breakdown in security led to the departure at the end of April of the Medecins Sans Frontieres, a French group, while another non-governmental agency, Equilibre, pulled out its nationals from the region temporarily.

The U.N. guards, who were dispatched to northern Iraq following the end of the Gulf war, were often criticised by aid workers and some Kurds for being inefficient.

But for the beleaguered Kurdish population, which elected a parliament and set up a "government" last year in defiance of Baghdad, they represented a symbol of international guarantees.

"The U.N. guards spend more time protecting themselves than protecting the others," charged a German aid worker who declined

to be named. "But their departure would be a blow for the Kurdish people who still rely a lot on humanitarian aid," he added.

Added Fabienne Buly, of France-Liberte: "The situation has deteriorated lately. We must be extra careful."

"When the Kurds give me sensitive information about security, I refer it to the non-governmental agencies by walkie-talkie rather than inform the guards first," she said in Sulaymaniyah, home to 600,000 inhabitants.

## Islamic Jihad condemns verdict against U.S. embassy bombers

BEIRUT (AP) — Islamic Jihad, the spearhead of anti-Western extremism during Lebanon's civil war, has denounced a military court ruling that denied amnesty for suspects in the 1983 U.S. embassy bombing, newspapers said Friday.

A purported Islamic Jihad statement, published by the Lebanese dailies Al Nahar and Al Hayat, said: "The heroic operation, whose perpetrators some collaborators are trying to convict, was aimed at hitting the ill-omened nest that masterminded the Zionist invasion of Lebanon" in 1982.

The identical statements were left in the mailboxes of the two newspapers. But there was no way to prove their authenticity. The military court of appeal Tuesday reversed an earlier ruling by a lower military tribunal that the suicide bombing of the embassy was a political crime, whose perpetrators were covered by a post-civil war general amnesty.

The denunciation published Friday described the ruling by the country's highest martial judicial authority as "submission by Lebanese authorities to the collaborators."

It urged the government to "respect the will of your people... and value its sacrifices."

However, the statement did not contain any threats against the West, which had characterised Islamic Jihad's communications in the 1980s, when the group led bombing and kidnapping campaigns against Western targets and nationals.

Islamic Jihad is an underground group which claimed responsibility for April 18, 1983, suicide bombing of the U.S. embassy. In addition to the driver of the explosives-laden truck, 62 perished in the bombing.

Six men, including five Lebanese and an Egyptian, have been charged in absentia with acquiring the truck, rigging it with explosives and setting it off at the seven-story seaside embassy compound.

The attack ushered in an era of extremism during which 241 American servicemen and 58 French paratroopers were killed in twin suicide bombings Oct. 23, 1983.

In the next four years, Islamic Jihad and other groups kidnapped 92 Westerners in Lebanon, many of them Americans. The last American hostage, former Associated Press Middle East correspondent Terry Anderson, was freed in December 1991.

The Lebanese government issued a general amnesty in August 1991 for all political crimes committed during the 1975-1990 civil war.

Last month, a Beirut military court said the pardon covers the embassy's suspected bombers.

That aroused fears that kidnappers, bombers and hijackers would evade prosecution — a precedent that would complicate the government's campaign to shed off the country's extremist image.

The masterminds of most crimes remain at large and many of them commute between east Lebanon's Bekaa Valley and Iran.

This week's ruling by the military court of appeals was expected to avoid a new confrontation with the United States.

## Afghan kidnappers free three European diplomats

QUETTA, Pakistan (R) — An Afghan guerrilla commander has released three European diplomats he had kidnapped at gunpoint last month, Pakistan and British officials said.

Jack Dods of Britain, Stefan Elbert of Germany and Gert Pliening of the Netherlands were freed unconditionally and handed over to officials in Pakistan, British diplomats said.

"They have been walked across the border," one said.

Guerrilla commander Ghulam Nabi Noorzai released them into the custody of Afghan elders in the border town of Spinboldak, Iran Elahi, assistant commissioner of Pakistan's Chaman border district, told Reuters.

The Afghan officials accompanied them to the border where they were handed over to Pakistani officials.

"Noorzai released them today unconditionally," Mr. Elahi said by telephone from Chaman.

"We're delighted," British High Commissioner Sir Nicholas

Barrington said in Islamabad. "It's been a long process and we're grateful for the efforts of the Pakistani officials and our friends in Afghanistan."

Mr. Noorzai, a member of the Hardline Hezb-e-Islami party of Afghan Prime Minister-designate Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, demanded the release of two of his men arrested in Pakistan on charges of gun-running in return for the diplomats.

Pakistani officials refused the request.

The three kidnapped diplomats had been suffering stomach problems, according to a relative of their Pakistani companion who tried to visit them this week.

Haji Musa Hazara said he was denied permission to meet the men but was told by visitors that all three were unharmed and their clothing was dry.

Pakistani officials said they had sent food, fruit and mineral water across the border regularly for the diplomats.

The diplomats smuggled out

the diplomats were arrested for entering Afghanistan without valid papers.

The three officers had been on a duty tour to Baluchistan.

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The diplomats smuggled out

two letters complaining about their poor conditions and saying Pakistani officials involved in the negotiations to free them were holding up their release.

Islamabad denied the accusation and said the diplomats had travelled into Afghanistan in spite of advice from Pakistani officials.

Kidnapping is common on Pakistan's border with Afghanistan.

Several Chinese workers at a copper mine in southern Baluchistan were kidnapped by Afghan guerrillas and taken over the border last year. They were released several days later and Pakistani officials said no ransom was paid.

Pakistani officials said Mr. Dods, a second secretary at the deputy high commission in Karachi, had told local authorities about his visit to Quetta.

The group arrived with two armed guards provided by the government of the southern province of Sind, of which Karachi is the capital.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 ..... Soccer Match  
19:00 ..... News in French  
19:15 ..... Fenechur  
19:30 ..... News in Hebrew  
20:00 ..... News in Arabic  
20:30 ..... Super Bloops  
21:00 ..... Local Programme  
21:30 ..... Music  
22:00 ..... News in English  
22:20 ..... Feature Film: "Dead on the Money"

### PRAYER TIMES

04:05 ..... Fajr  
07:34 ..... (Sunrise) Duha  
12:35 ..... Dhuhr  
16:12 ..... Asr  
19:30 ..... Maghreb  
20:58 ..... 'Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swatfeh, Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624990  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440  
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757  
Terrasanta Church Tel. 622366  
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543  
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331  
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261  
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751  
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256  
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932  
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675991

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The Khamsin weather conditions will continue to affect the Kingdom Saturday. Therefore, it will be relatively hot, dusty and partly cloudy, with scattered showers expected in various parts of Jordan. Winds will be westerly moderate, freshening at times. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy and winds will be southerly fresh and seas rough.

### Min./Max. temp.

Aqaba ..... 16/20  
Amman ..... 22/33  
Desert ..... 15/32  
Jordan Valley ..... 20/33

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

#### NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:  
Dr. Mohammad Al Sawwa ..... 732056  
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayyem ..... 620115  
Dr. Youssef Nuseir ..... 751144  
Dr. Jamel Tarif ..... 784710  
Fina pharmacy ..... 661912  
Ferdous pharmacy ..... 778336  
Al Asena pharmacy ..... 637053  
Nasrallah pharmacy ..... 625672  
Al Salam pharmacy ..... 636730  
Yacoub pharmacy ..... 644945  
Simcissat pharmacy ..... 637660  
Najib pharmacy ..... 847632

#### IRBIDI:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu Zu'bi ..... (—)  
Al Ouds Pharmacy ..... (—)

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ..... 637111  
Civil Defence Department ..... 661111  
Civil Defence Immediate  
Rescue ..... 630341  
Civil Defence Emergency ..... 199  
Fire Brigade ..... 192, 621111, 637777  
Blood Bank ..... 891228  
Highway Police ..... 843402  
Traffic Police ..... 843402  
Public Security Department ..... 630321  
Hotel Complaints ..... 605800  
Price Complaints ..... 661176  
Water and Sewerage  
Complaints ..... 897467  
Amman Municipality  
Complaints ..... 787111  
Telephone Information  
(directory assistance) ..... 121  
Overseas Calls ..... 010230  
Central Amman Telephone  
Repair ..... 623101  
Abdali Telephones Repairs ..... 661101

### HOSPITALS

Jordan Television ..... 773111  
Radio Jordan ..... 774111  
Water Authority ..... 680100  
Jordan Electricity Authority ..... 815615  
Electric Power  
Company ..... 636381  
RJ Flight Information ..... 08-53200  
Queen Alia Int. Airport ..... 08-53200

### FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)  
06:00 ..... Jakarta, Singapore (RJ)

## MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

### Pro-Israeli militiamen killed in Lebanon

MARJAYOUN (AFP) — Guerrillas killed a member of Israel's proxy Lebanese militia in fighting early Friday inside Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon, security sources said. South Lebanon Army (SLA) militiamen were on routine patrol in the Qantara region of the central sector of the zone when they intercepted an anti-Israeli commando. A SLA militiaman was killed in the 30-minute fighting, the source said. On Thursday, afternoon assailants fired anti-tank rockets against SLA positions, including Qantara, Lebanon police reported. The Faithful Resistance, a group close to the Iranian-backed Muslim fundamentalist Hizbollah movement, claimed responsibility for the attack. A statement in Beirut said a remote-control bomb exploded at the passage of a joint Israeli-SLA patrol "killing and wounding several people in the ranks of the enemy."

### Greece hopes Russia will reconsider veto

ATHENS (R) — Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis Thursday urged Russia to reconsider its veto of reforming the financing of the U.N. peacekeeping operation in Cyprus. Russia, in financial trouble and reluctant to take on new burdens, stunned the Security Council Tuesday by vetoing a British resolution to share the costs of the 1,500-strong U.N. peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) among all U.N. members instead of relying on voluntary donations. "I want to hope that Russia will reconsider its veto and that the peacekeeping force will remain in Cyprus," Mr. Mitsotakis told reporters after talks with Cypriot President Glafos Clerides in Athens. "It is not possible to talk about stationing tens of thousands of U.N. troops in other parts of the world and not be able to maintain a small force in Cyprus," he added. UNFICYP, which patrols a 180-kilometre buffer zone dividing Cyprus, is the only U.N. peacekeeping force to rely on voluntary donations. It has been stationed on the island since 1964 between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities. Contributing countries are disenchanted with the financial burden and lack of progress in negotiations to reunite the island. Mr. Clerides has told the United Nations that he would ask Greece to send troops to Cyprus if a withdrawal or reduction in UNFICYP endangered its security.

### Austrian chancellor to visit Israel

TEL AVIV (R) — Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky will make a four-day visit to Israel from June 8. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's office said Friday. "This will be the first official visit by an Austrian chancellor to Israel," it said in a statement. Israeli-Austrian relations deteriorated during Kurt Waldheim's six years as Austrian president, which ended in 1992. Dr. Waldheim, a former U.N. secretary-general, denied accusations that during his service in Adolf Hitler's army in World War II he knew of people being deported to death camps. Relations improved after Mr. Vranitzky, in a formal declaration in 1991, said Austrians, incorporated into the Nazi Third Reich in 1938, had been not only victims of Nazism but also its servants. During the visit Hebrew University will grant Mr. Vranitzky an honorary doctorate of philosophy, citing his declaration and his key role in the fight against fascism and anti-Semitism.

### Iran, Afghanistan to help refugee return

NICOSTIA (R) — Iran, Afghanistan and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have agreed to help 700,000 refugees who fled to Iran during the Afghan civil war return home by the end of the year. The official Iranian news agency IRNA said delegations from the two countries met a UNHCR team in Tehran Thursday and agreed to set up bases in Afghanistan to help ease the return. IRNA quoted the leader of the Iranian delegation Ahmad Huseini as saying 518,000 of an estimated three million Afghans who fled to Iran had already headed home voluntarily. He said the UNHCR had given material aid to 55,000 of them. In February the governor of Iran's Khosravi province ordered police to round up and deport 300,000 unregistered Afghan refugees from the province, which borders Afghanistan. IRNA also quoted a UNHCR official as saying only \$116 million had been allocated to the repatriation of Afghan refugees, which he described as "insufficient." He said the UNHCR gave 25- and 50-kilo bags of wheat to each refugee who returned home, to support them for three months.

### Israeli admits heroin charge in New Zealand

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AFP) — An Israeli admitted Friday to importing heroin valued at around 80,000 New Zealand dollars (\$43,600) when he appeared in the district court here. Police Sergeant Pat Creasey told the court the heroin, which weighed some nine grammes (one third of an ounce), was internally secreted in four rubber bags. Avraham Alkanif, aged 27, unemployed, was convicted and committed in custody to the high court for sentence on June 1. Sgt. Creasey said Mr. Alkanif was searched by customs at Christchurch on his return from four days in Thailand and two in Singapore. He denied any involvement with drugs, refused a medical examination, and refused to eat or drink. The defendant later agreed to a medical scan and four objects showed up in his lower rectum. Eventually these were recovered and found to contain 40 per cent pure heroin.

### Peres to visit India, China

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres leaves Sunday on a visit to India and China, both of which established diplomatic relations with the Jewish state in January 1992. It will be the first official visit by an Israeli foreign minister to India. Mr. Peres' predecessor, David Levy, was in Peking 16 months ago to sign the protocol establishing diplomatic ties between the two sides. India, a leader of the Non-Aligned Movement and a strong supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), has withheld recognition of Israel since its founding in 1948, insisting that Israel resolve its conflict with the Arabs. India agreed to diplomatic relations to join in multilateral talks tied to the U.S.-backed Middle East peace process. In a news conference earlier this week, Mr. Peres said he hoped his visit to New Delhi would mark "a new chapter in relations between India and Israel." He said he expected to sign several cooperation agreements on culture and tourism and would offer Israel's help in agricultural projects. "Here, no matter that India is so large and great and Israel is so small, we can cooperate to a very great extent," he said.

### Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:05 ..... Larnaca (CY)  
09:15 ..... Beirut (ME)  
12:30 ..... Sanaa (YV)  
21:00 ..... Dubai (EM)  
23:45 ..... Damascus, Paris (AF)

### MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple ..... 700/700  
Banana ..... 680/680  
Banana (Mukannas) ..... 620/630  
Beans ..... 540/430  
Cabbage ..... 70/40  
Carrot ..... 130/90  
Cauliflower ..... 250/180  
Cucumbers (large) ..... 130/180  
Cucumbers (small) ..... 240/180  
Eggplant ..... 300/180  
Garlic ..... 250/120  
Grapefruit ..... 240/180  
Lemon ..... 580/500  
Marrow (large) ..... 150/100  
Marrow (small) ..... 150/100  
Mint ..... 80  
Onion (dry) ..... 230/160  
Onion (green) ..... 600/250  
Orange ..... 450/130  
Pepper (hot) ..... 600/250  
Pepper (sweet) ..... 200/150  
Potato ..... 210/160  
Tomato ..... 520/300  
Spinach ..... 250/1



## Jordan Times

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## The demise of communism places new burdens on the U.S.

By John Le Carré

BOSTON — It wasn't the spies who won the cold war. I do not believe that in the end spies mattered very much.

Their capsule isolation and their remote theorising actually prevented them from seeing, as late as 1987 or 1988, what anybody in the street could have told them: "It's over. We've won. The Iron Curtain is crashing down! The monolith we fought is a bag of bones! Come out of your trenches and smile!"

Even the victory, for them, was a cunning Bolshevik trick. And, anyway, what had they got to smile about? It was a victory achieved by openness, not secrecy. By frankness, not intrigue. The Soviet empire did not fall apart because spooks had bugged the men's room in the Kremlin or put broken glass in Mrs. Brezhnev's bath but because running a huge, closed, repressive society in the 1980s had become — economically, socially, militarily and technologically impossible.

And the joke is that if the outcome of the cold war had been left to the spies, then on all the evidence so far our spies would have come a poor second. And thank God for it.

The strength of a true democracy is that it cannot command the fear, the discipline, the absolutism or the secret prisons that are the prerequisite of a police state. The strength of America is in her frankness, her mobility of mind, her willingness to declare herself, take risks and change. Not in her secrecy.

And today, Americans and

Russians are working, if not hand in hand, at least side by side to dismantle the arsenals for which they stretched their economies to breaking point.

The impossible happened immediately. The difficult, it seems, is going to take a great deal longer.

The difficult is realising that we are short of all our old excuses for not addressing the real problems of the earth, that we can no longer put our humanity on hold in order to defend humanity. The difficult is finding a better name for the compassionate aspects of communism: because we need them as much today as we ever did. They just got into the wrong hands.

For the uninstructed public, the spies popped up like gray ghosts scurrying across the world stage: the Rosenbergs, Alger Hiss (maybe), Abel, Fuchs, Pontecorvo, Nunn May, Kroger, Burgess, McLean, Blunt, Philby — on and on, these lonely deciders held up a dark mirror to us, and the man in the street peered shyly in, and shuddered.

When people tell me I am a genre writer, I can only reply, "Yes, but the cold war, was a genre war." And now, thank God, my element, my genre, is no longer at the centre of our concerns. Though the spies spy on, they cannot impress us as they used to.

Spying was the passion of my time. I was there, I felt some of it on my own body. I reported on it. And as I grew away from it, and recollected it in tranquility, I

made it my way of looking at life. So I ask myself: What did we become when we were who we were? And is it still around? And did we, in fighting for our freedom, give too much of it away?

The cold war is over, but I don't remember any singing in the streets or church bells ringing. Are we too tired to sing? Or too dazed by our luck? Has something crippled us on our way from there to here?

Is our doctrine of endless expansion in a shrinking world as played out as the doctrine of endless revolution that we have just sent packing? A few years ago, when a far country was threatened by communism, we hurried to its aid. Their problem was our problem. We made heroes out of timid dictators we shouldn't have entertained in the

woodshed.

Too often we confused anti-colonialism with communism, but then the Communists did that, too. We gave money. Mostly, American money. Some of it feathered some pretty disgusting nests, but some of it got to the right places. At least we acted. We said we cared. Our response to communism was sometimes crude and sometimes misguided, but it was the only one we had. It was justified and it worked.

Today, when a not-so-far country is torn apart by civil war, and one of its ethnic minorities is being put to torture, rape and murder before our eyes, our politicians tell us not to become emotional. They mean: If you do, you'll have to pay for it.

"We didn't win the cold war just to get involved in other peo-

ple's fights. What's a little ethnic cleansing between ancient enemies? This is history man."

Meanwhile, America stands where she never stood before: as the undisputed victor of a two-generation-long war of attrition, as the world's only superpower and — increasingly, it seems — its only arbiter.

But Europe and America still hesitate. Because we are afraid not just of this involvement — in former Yugoslavia — but of the precedent we would be creating.

"So we go in," say the doubters. "We bomb. We put in ground troops. We clean the place up and as soon as we get out they start again. Is that what we're into now? Quartering the globe, intervening wherever the news media decide they can raise a tear in the public eye? Next stop Sudan? And after that, how about we grapple with the former Soviet Union maybe? They're having atrocities daily over there, while our eyes are still fixed on former Yugoslavia."

And then that same old sneering cry: "We're being too emotional."

And, of course, they're right. Except.

Except that, if there is one eternal truth of politics it is that there are always a dozen good reasons for doing nothing. To do something, you've got to want to do it. Like, for instance, Desert Storm or the Falklands.

Then we're talking spheres of interest and geopolitics and honoring unbreakable promises. And we're allowed to be as emotional

as we like. Just as long as we remember to keep our pity under control elsewhere.

Alas, whatever the outcome of the present argument about what to do with former Yugoslavia, I don't think there's any way on earth that the United States can escape the responsibility for repeated and risky foreign intervention in the coming decades.

With the clamps of the cold war removed, old feuds are going to flare up everywhere. A Pax Americana of some kind is inevitable.

Also — whatever isolationist feelings are abroad — I don't think that young America is going to put up with being a spectator to the rest of the world's misfortune.

The fight against communism diminished us. That's why we were unable to rejoice at our victory. It left in us a state of false and corrosive orthodoxy. It licensed our excesses, and we didn't like ourselves the better for them. It dulled our love of dissent and our sense of life's adventure.

In my country, and perhaps in America as well, the service industries of criticism have almost drowned the magic of creation. Our intellectuals hate too much. Our press revels in public executions. We are poisoning ourselves with malice. Yet we take no risks. We are not brave. Our orthodoxy still gives us no way out.

Yet we have never been so free. We no longer need to clap the wings of our humanity. It's time we flew again — International Herald Tribune.

## Twisting aims may help

THE FAILURE of Washington to sway its European partners to its view on the Bosnian conflict raises doubts about both the status of the U.S. as the only remaining superpower and the clout of the new American president in the international arena.

Since he assumed power in January, President Bill Clinton has been orchestrating continuous promises and pledges to the effect that his administration would no longer stomach the Serbian aggression and atrocities. Clinton's stance on the Bosnian tragedy pre-dated his election in November when he campaigned rather emotionally and forcefully in favour of stopping the Serbian crimes against humanity in rump Yugoslavia. Ever since, he has been making one statement after the other that the time had arrived for a meaningful action in defence of the Muslims of Bosnia. By not acting on that repeated threat, however, the U.S. president risks appearing weak on a clear matter that shocked the conscience of his people as well as that of humanity.

This apparent weakness comes on the heels of Clinton's failure thus far to win the support of the U.S. Congress on key elements of his economic package. The White House cannot afford to look so lame so early in the life of the new administration. If the president is truly agonising over the fate of the Muslims in Bosnia, he has plenty of opportunities to correct the situation and in the process salvage his reputation as a world leader capable of acting effectively and forcefully to end bloody conflicts.

If the U.N. Security Council is incapable of acting on the Bosnian scene because of Moscow's clear biased position in support of the Serbs, the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) or the Non-Aligned Movement can refer the entire file on Bosnia to the General Assembly. The assembly can be convened for an emergency session and under the famous "uniting for peace" resolution of 1950, the members of the United Nations can authorise military action against the rebellious Serbs even if the Security Council continues to be paralysed by the attitudes of Moscow and Paris. The 1950 resolution was improvised by Washington to permit large-scale military operations against North Korea and its allies in the wake of the Soviet veto in the Security Council in the same year.

In fact, the U.S. does not even need a decision by the General Assembly to act and make good on its pledges to do something about the Serbian atrocities and acts of genocide since the already adopted Security Council resolutions on Yugoslavia are broad enough to allow for even unilateral military actions. President Clinton has to show strength and determination and twist a few arms if necessary to prove his sincerity and resolve. By so doing, he will not only restore popularity and credibility for himself. He will also regain for his nation the prestige that it has clearly lost when U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher came back empty-handed last week after failing to rally the support of the U.S.' closest allies.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

DISAPPOINTMENT AND frustration is the general feeling prevailing in the Arab World following the total collapse of the peace talks in Washington, said Al Dustour daily. Nine sessions of Arab-Israeli talks have been wasted over more than a year of diplomacy and empty promises from the U.S. administrations, the paper said. It was another opportunity wasted and another chance for establishing peace missed because the Israelis continue to hold on to their intransigent position while the Americans continue to back away from their pledges and promises to help the two sides attain peace, the paper continued. Since the outset of the ninth session it was clear that Israel was not willing to offer any concession or reach a compromise on any of the topics, and it was clear from the beginning that the Clinton administration was not willing to commit itself to a meaningful action to force the Israelis to respect the international legitimacy, the paper added. The past three weeks, the U.S. administration played the role of bystander passively watching the Arabs and the Israelis meet and refraining from taking any step towards bringing the views of the two sides closer, it pointed out. The ninth session was in fact a testing ground for the American administration which had claimed it would play the role of full partner to help reach a settlement, the paper said. With the loss of this last chance, it said, Washington has lost its credibility, and it is reasonable to believe that the position of those who had originally opposed the negotiations in the first place is strengthened as they indeed proved to be futile.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily attributed the current border dispute between Cairo and Khartoum to differences in general policies following Cairo's accusing Khartoum of encouraging terrorism actions in Egypt and playing to the tunes of Tehran. Tareq Masarweh implied in his column that Egypt was acting upon directives from Washington which has repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the Sudanese government's policies and which, said the writer, had been fomenting the north-south strife in Sudan by fuelling the rebellion in the south, aiming the separatist groups and sabotaging the north-south peace talks. It is to be recalled that the Western nations, which had colonised the Arab World among other parts of the world had worked out maps for the Arabs. These artificially created borders could, at any minute, be exploited and transformed into trouble spots, the writer pointed out. It was the English who had sown the seeds for the current dispute and it is the Americans who are now trying to stir trouble between the two Arab neighbours, he charged.

## THE WEEK IN PRINT Talks of peace fizzle out as Arab foreign ministers expected to take decision

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

The aborted ninth round of Arab-Israeli peace talks, the repercussions of the invalidation of the Iraqi 25-banknote bill, the disputed Halayeb territory on the border between Egypt and Sudan, as well as a number of domestic issues were given prominence in the Jordanian press last week.

As was expected, the ninth round of peace talks in Washington had the same fate as the previous rounds: total collapse and failure, said Al Dustour daily. The ninth round proved that Israel is not serious about peace with the Arabs and will not implement any U.N. resolutions, the paper added. Therefore, said the paper, the Arab foreign ministers are expected to take a final decision with regard to the continuation of the peace process.

Abdul Rahim Omar, a columnist in Al Ra'i, said that only the use of arms can make Israel understand that it must respect U.N. resolutions and the rights of others. He said that the talks have failed simply because they were not linked in any way to the ongoing battles in the streets of Palestine.

He said that as long as the United States, which backs Israel in every way, remains hostile towards the Arabs nothing can be achieved.

Salameh Ekour, a writer in Sawt Al Shaab, mocked the statements of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks. The delegation leaders have deceived the Palestinian people into believing that they had at last taken the initiative at the peace process in a manner that would ensure the success of the negotiations, said Ekour.

He said that the Palestinian delegation had launched a wide media campaign which gave the erroneous impression that a Palestinian-Israeli agreement was in the making.

His views were backed by Mona Shugair, a columnist in Al Dustour, who said that Palestinian delegation members have been issuing statements contradicting each other and succeeded only in misleading the public. The Palestinian people wanted to hear statements reflecting objectively the progress of the talks and not mere expectations, she said. The public wanted solid facts rather than the creation of a false atmosphere of optimism, she added.

Mahmoud Rimawi, a columnist in Al Ra'i, recalled that before the start of the ninth round American officials, including Bill Clinton, had been issuing stern warnings against those trying to obstruct the

peace process, saying that Washington would not remain passive at the talks.

In fact, Washington pledged to play the role of full partner in the peace process, added the writer. He said that the Americans, regrettably, allowed the Israelis to obstruct the peace talks and allowed themselves to remain passive regarding Israel's intransigent position, thus rendering the peace process a total failure.

Saleh Qallab called on the PLO to invite the Arabs to an urgent summit and ask for an explanation from those Arab countries which had exercised pressure on the Palestinians to return to the talks, which ended in failure. The columnist, who writes in Al Dustour, said that the PLO should strongly ask the Arab states to back its moves, at all international levels, to restore the rights of the Palestinians and accept its conditions for further talks with Israel from now on.

The invalidation of the Iraqi 25-banknote drew mixed reactions from columnists in the Jordanian press last week. Hani Saoudi said that no one should blame the Jordanians who kept Iraqi currency because during the two Gulf wars Jordan's markets were inundated with the Iraqi currency as the Kingdom continued to provide supplies to Iraq, especially during its war with Iran.

The writer, in his column appearing in Al Ra'i daily, said that the Jordanian people were dealt severe blows not only by the invalidation of the Iraqi banknote but also throughout the two wars in the region and due to the loss of valuable markets.

He demanded that a Jordanian-Iraqi agreement be worked out to safeguard the Jordanian people's interests through special arrangements and bank accounts supervised by the Central Bank of Jordan.

Mohammad Subeichi, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that those who kept Iraqi dinars at home were speculating with the Iraqi people's money hoping that one day they would sell the currency and make profits. The poor people of Jordan did not hoard any Iraqi currency and only the rich did that in a bid to amass more wealth at the expense of the suffering Iraqi people, Subeichi said.

His views were countered by Ahmad Al Mieleh, in Al Ra'i, who said that since Jordanian-Iraqi trade has been free and many Jordanian merchants kept accounts in Iraqi currency something must be done to compensate the victims of the recent Iraqi move. He said the Central Bank should interfere with the Iraqi authorities to settle this issue and should also

interfere and control the current confusion and speculation in the local money markets.

Mahmoud Rimawi, who writes for Al Ra'i, said that it was the prerogative of the Iraqi government to protect the nation's interests in view of the continued sanctions and the economic deterioration.

The writer said that following the Gulf war Iraq had tried to normalise its relations with the world community, but all its attempts ended in failure. Moreover, attempts on the part of other nations were made to destroy the Iraqi economy through its currency, thus prompting the Iraqi move.

This view was backed by economist Fahed Fanek who said that according to the Iraqi law no Iraqi currency was supposed to leave the country. Any Iraqi dinars found outside Iraq were illegal in the first place, said the writer in Al Ra'i. The speculators had hoped that one day they could exchange these dinars at the rate of three dollars to the dinar, thus amassing a fortune and further destroying the Iraqi economy, said the writer.

Al Dustour daily expressed apprehension that the dispute over Halayeb would drive Sudan and Egypt to war. The paper said that the two Arab states have been living in harmony for decades and it is sad to see them quarrelling over a disputed area whose problems could be settled amicably.

Abdul Rahim Omar, a columnist in Al Ra'i, said that the dispute was triggered by the official economic and political stands of Khartoum and Cairo vis-a-vis each other. He said that being hostile to Sudan, Egypt is trying to offer service to the enemies of this Arab nation like it did during the Gulf war on Iraq.

Mohammad Subeichi, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that the government should take severe measures against the civil servants and employees in public institutions accepting gifts and favours from people who expect something in return, at the expense of the national interest.

Citing the example of China, where the government issued strict rules against accepting gifts, the writer said that in Jordan gifts are being given to all kinds of employees by private companies and in violation of Article 170 of the penal code which considers the acceptance of gifts as a bribe for which the culprit deserves two years imprisonment.

Salameh Ekour, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, called on the government to replace all non-Jordanian workers with job seekers in a strong move to end the unemployment problem.

## TALKS ADJOURN UNTIL JUNE

### U.S., Israeli and Palestinian papers 'could make up joint statement'

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Arab-Israeli peace negotiations adjourned until June following three weeks of intense discussion and the active engagement of the United States as a full partner.

The leader of the U.S. peace talks team, Edward Djerejian, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, told a news briefing Thursday that all the negotiating tracks had "demonstrated a deeper discussion of substance and intense engagement."

The negotiations involve direct peace talks between Israel and its Arab neighbours — Syria, Lebanon and Jordan — and discussions between Israeli and Palestinian representatives on interim self-governing arrangements for the occupied territories.

"Consistent with the efforts by the parties, the United States has stepped up its full partner role and has worked actively and productively with the parties to define issues and help produce common ground," Mr. Djerejian said.

On the Israeli-Palestinian track, important developments occurred, he said. The two sides formed working groups on land and water issues, on the concept of interim arrangements, and working group on human rights. They exchanged substantive drafts of a declaration of principles.

"These drafts were extensive in scope and addressed issues such as elections, interim self-governing arrangements, and security," Mr. Djerejian said. "This work provides an important basis, in our view, for future progress."

The Israelis and Palestinians subsequently agreed to engage seriously on a United States draft for a joint statement incorporating substantive elements of their own drafts, he said.

"Both parties went beyond simply articulating principles. We saw the evolution of positions and the beginning of the emergence of common elements in their stands on key issues," Mr. Djerejian said.

Although the Palestinians were dissatisfied with lack of improvements on the ground in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and reduced the size of their delegation and chose not to attend working groups for the last few days of negotiations, he said, "they did and have remained engaged."

In this regard, playing the role of full partner, the United States called a trilateral meeting with Israeli and Palestinian delegates Wednesday in order to help the parties, he said. Although the Palestinians did not attend, the U.S. shared with Israel and with the Palestinians "a paper reflecting elements drawn from the Israeli and Palestinian papers which could, in our view, make up a joint statement," Mr. Djerejian explained.

"We discussed the U.S. paper in detail yesterday and today with both Israeli and the Palestinians and will continue to do so," he said. Tabling the paper was designed "to capture the substantive progress that the sides had

made during the last three weeks and help guide them toward areas that need to be discussed further," Mr. Djerejian said.

On the Syrian-Israeli track, he said the parties continued to address the core issues of withdrawal, peace, and security. "They reviewed texts, engaged in detailed discussion of their positions, and addressed important concepts such as simultaneity," Djerejian said, adding "the United States has also been deeply involved with Syria and Israel in an effort to help them move forward on the core issues."

On the Jordanian-Israeli track, the parties established working groups to discuss key issues of importance to both sides. "The working groups have addressed substantive issues such as water, the environment, energy, economics and tourism, and refugees and displaced persons," he said.

On the Lebanon-Israeli track, Mr. Djerejian said, "for the first time we have substantive written proposals submitted by both sides now which address key issues in the negotiations. The delegations have begun the serious work of explaining and exchanging assessments on their respective documents," he said.

Mr. Djerejian said the U.S. was discussing with the parties reconvening the negotiations in June after the Jewish and Muslim holidays.

"The negotiations on all the tracks have taken on a significant and more intense character and the United States intends to work with the parties, as a full partner, as they engage more deeply on the tough issues," he told the reporters. "But the parties must also do their part."

"We will be there to help them in the important task of making peace. But we cannot do it for them," he said. "It is up to the parties to show the necessary flexibility, creativity, and commitment to success required to achieve progress."

Noting the difficult situation on the ground in the occupied terri-

ories before the talks resumed, on April 27, Mr. Djerejian said in response to questions that the U.S. has been active in dealing with both the Israelis and the Palestinians "to see what can be done to alleviate the conditions on the ground...in a way that can help facilitate the talks themselves."

After calling for a trilateral meeting between Palestinians, Israelis and the U.S. certainly, should demonstrate a full partner role. This is something that the Palestinians themselves have been asking for," Mr. Djerejian noted.

He also acknowledged not speaking of a "round" of negotiations as has been the case in the past. "We are talking about reconvening the negotiations," Mr. Djerejian said. "We think it's very important to maintain the momentum at the negotiating table. We have heard no objection to this from the parties," he said.

The assistant secretary said that while there has been movement forward in substance on the various tracks, "each track has its own problems and the substantive differences are different in each track."

But the "level of engagement" on key issues has been "important and encouraging," Mr. Djerejian said. "We certainly would have welcomed that more progress be made in each one of the tracks, but we have to work with each one of the parties within the political parameters that they are dealing with and in the face of the particular key issues they have to address and the substantive gaps they have to fill."

"That obviously is not an easy task, but we are very intent on doing everything possible to help narrow those gaps," he said. "We have been very active on the Israeli-Syrian track in the last few weeks and we have been engaged very closely with both the Israelis and the Syrians on what we think would be necessary to move those substantive negotiations forward," Mr. Djerejian said.

## LETTERS

### Mistakes we pay for

To the Editor:

It was my misfortune to witness a horrendous accident today involving an ambulance and a private car at a busy intersection. The ambulance was on an emergency run with lights flashing but no siren. As we all know, ambulances, police cars, fire trucks etc. have right of way, even though the lights are against them, and as courteous drivers we give way to these vehicles. The car involved was crossing the intersection on a green light, in full compliance with the law. Had the driver heard the ambulance he would have been alerted and able to stop.

There has been a lot in the media recently about traffic accidents and the obvious necessity to educate people as to how to be put in place to safeguard all road users. These rules were not made up on a whim, they save lives.

Countless times I have noticed ambulances making full use of their emergency lights but no siren. With this in mind, I implore the people who drive these emergency vehicles to use their sirens. We drivers hear you before we see you.

J. Maari,  
Amman.

# Features

## Eurovision stars groups from Bosnia, Croatia

By Anne Senior  
Reuters

DUBLIN — The Eurovision Song Contest, the annual pop extravaganza that gave the world lyrics like Boom-Bang-A-Bang and La La La, has become an unlikely showcase for the suffering in the former Yugoslavia.

The contest, long pilloried by music critics as a platform for the bland and banal, is enjoying a new lease of life this year courtesy of entries from Bosnia and Croatia, and an offbeat venue — a show-jumping arena in rural Ireland.

A group of Bosnian musicians braved Sarajevo machine-gun fire to travel to this Saturday's songfest and Croatia is tipped for success with Don't Ever Cry, ensuring the much-debated but popular show will be an intriguing mix of pop and politics whatever its musical merits. Serbia is not taking part.

Bosnia's ballad "The Pain Of The Whole World" explores the plight of Serb-besieged Sarajevo through a soldier's love song, striking a more serious note than the jaunty pop jingles that tend to score high marks with the juries of the 25 competing countries, all members of the European Broadcasting Union.

Ireland is already gripped by "Eurovision-fever," with newspapers devoting page after page to this year's entries and to Irish millionaire businessman Noel C. Duggan, who hit on the idea of holding the contest at his equestrian

arena in southwest Ireland, some 270 kilometres from Dublin.

Organisers reject the charge that Eurovision is, in the words of one Irish columnist, an "austere showcase for puerile ditties," and insist the contest is undergoing a revival like 1970s hippy fashions and flared trousers.

"It has cult status," said Deirdre Henchy, head of Eurovision publicity for the state-owned television service RTE, which is broadcasting the 38th annual song contest live to an estimated 300 million viewers around Europe and beyond.

Millions more are expected to tune into recordings of the programme, which will be seen in a total of 33 countries.

"The media have been saying 'get out your tank-tops and your flares and sit down to Eurovision'," Henchy said in a telephone interview from the contest venue in Millstreet, County Cork.

"It's part of the nostalgia boom we're having." Sceptics suspect the two-million-pound (\$3 million) contest is as much about promoting local tourism as European music, for Eurovision is not renowned for consistently good song-writing.

Previous winners include a host of near-nonsense titles, such as Spain's La La La in 1968, Britain's Boom-Bang-A-Bang in 1969, and Sweden's Diggi-Loo-Diggi-Ley from 1984.

Contestants are being whisked off this week to be

filmed in Irish beauty spots, whose attractions will be beamed into millions of potential tourists' homes on Eurovision night.

"We are delighted to have this opportunity of attracting visitors to the southwest at the earlier part of the tourist season and thus increasing local revenue," RTE's Director

General Joe Barry said at the launch of the Millstreet project.

Eurovision has made Millstreet into a boom town, inspiring endless newspaper articles here on how the rural backwater with 13 pubs but no hotel is to become the "musical capital of Europe" for the day on May 15.

The tranquil village has been transformed into a high-tech communication hub for the contest. New telephone cables have been specially laid, a satellite station is ready to beam the tunes around the world, and the village has even been equipped with its first set of traffic lights.

Mr. Duggan, a self-made millionaire who pestered organisers with requests to hold the show at his Green Glens Arena after Ireland won last year in Sweden with Why Me? is being feted as a folk hero for boosting the local economy.

He said Tuesday he was "praying to God" everything would go right on the night.

The Bosnian group Fazla from Sarajevo, which describes itself as ethnically mixed, is hoping for a win for the strife-torn city. "We just pray God to have the peace in our country," said spokeswoman Ismeta Kravac in a RTE radio interview Tuesday, adding the group wanted Eurovision to be held in Sarajevo next year if they triumph Saturday.

But for the group, which left Sarajevo during a burst of shelling and machine-gun fire, it is probably not the winning but the taking part in a high-profile contest that matters.

Croatia's patriotic song with a catchy English chorus is not a favourite with some bookmakers to win the contest on a sympathy vote. Other fancied entries are Britain's Sonia with the jolly Better The Devil You Know and Ireland, In Your Eyes sung by Niamh Kavanagh.



Vivien Galletta (left) and Melita Sedie, who form the group PUT, the Croatian entry in the Eurovision Song Contest, wave to the photographers in Ireland (AFP photo)

## Religion and nationalism could forge a healthy nation

By Zuleikha Abu Rishbeh

The following article is translated from Al Ra'i daily, where it appeared on May 14 1993.

The joke about a Soviet citizen who served as an American agent claiming he would, in a number of years, ruin the world's second major power without spending a single penny, by simply placing the wrong man in the wrong place, is not really a joke, but rather a fact. Indeed, this has been the de facto socialist experiment in the former Soviet Union and other Socialist nations.

The bureaucracy which has weakened this socialist experiment, has transformed the regime from one upholding the slogan of justice and equality into one which is plagued by administrative and financial corruption.

This had been one of the main reasons for the dramatic collapse of the system. But there were other reasons like, for example, the attitude towards religion and nationalism. Under Soviet rule, the individual, as indeed the whole society, was deprived of exercising religion, and the regime considered religious people as enemies of communism. It was impossible under this regime for any religious person to reach a high and influential position.

Mosques, churches and religious men were a mere show case for the communist state which claimed that it was not anti-religion.

Coupled with the hostility towards religion, there had been open enmity towards nationalism. Communism was oriented against any form of nationalism because it believed in the unity of the working class around the world. It had thus succeeded in achieving this goal, to some extent by using oppression, but no sooner had the Soviet Union come face to face with the so-called perestroika than communism found itself confronting a great danger: the thirst of nationalities to emerge, the unity between East and West Germany, the independence of the Soviet republics.

Faced with this situation, the Soviet empire began to feel the urgent need to return to its real national and religious identity. Any regime harbouring enmity towards religion and nationalism is bound to be facing a great danger because these two elements are deeply embedded in the nations of the world.

However, we ought to differentiate between pure religion and political religion. Pure religion is the one exercised by my mother, it is the one which caters to the needs of the spirit and the relationship between man and his creator. Political religion is that form of religion peddled by certain groups in their struggle towards acquiring power. Therefore, resisting these groups

should not be interpreted as resisting religion itself, regardless of these groups' claims that they have the right to wage a holy war. But this statement should not in any way, be interpreted as an advocacy to resist such groups by violence and force.

Generally speaking, the Arab arena is currently witnessing a political Islam, which is alien to the nature of true Islam. This political Islam is a tool used by the Islamists who try to justify their struggle to attain power and draw around them followers, taking advantage of the fact that the Arab people are always ready and willing to accept Islamic teachings, especially when faced with difficult circumstances.

By contrast, within the capitalist system of the West we can see the power emanate from the fact that they grant freedom to individuals and groups, allowing them to freely exercise their own religious rites, leading their own spiritual lives or aspiring to attain their nationalist goals.

These Western systems of governments have allowed the public freedom of expression and criticism on any subject, including religion and national feelings. But these systems, at the same time, have created appropriate mechanisms to resist extremism, racial and sexual discrimination. In Britain, for instance, even the royal family did not escape the impudent criticism of the media and publications which have been revealing the secrets in the private life of the royal family members.

In the United States the system of government did not condone the Watergate scandal, neither has the public ever supported those who lack integrity; even George Bush, who was victorious in the Gulf war lost the support of the American electorate.

Now back to the nations' thirst for freedom and religious practice. One can only warn that the "Islamists' thought" which openly declares its enmity towards nationalism is bound to face the same crisis like that of the Soviet Union should these groups attain their goal and take over power. They would be exercising the single party dictatorship, their ideology on others and depriving people of free expression.

It is perhaps useful for all of us to learn from the Soviet experiment and open our eyes the situation in the Arab World where the religious campaign is overshadowing all other feelings, resembling the struggle which communism had waged against nationalism.

Should people be forced to accept this dominant power, by hook or by crook, the religious movement would be wielding the power with which it would control all aspects in people's lives. If

this happened, ordinary people who have been frustrated in the past will not find respite or a satisfactory solution to their lives. They would watch others exploiting the situation, joining the single party and acquiring higher positions.

In the search for religion and discovering facts, one is bound ailing social, cultural and economic realities.

In the absence of democracy, in light of repression and lack of social justice, due to the political and administrative corruption and the deteriorating economic situation and as a result of the continued defeats and conflicts, the seeds embedded in the hearts of people blossom in reaction to what is happening around them.

This of course gives way to political religion, opening the way for certain groups to take advantage of the situation. A religious person is the one who exercises religious rites, worships God in the normal manner, does not contemplate or harbour enmity towards the idea of nationalism and does not consider opting for "an Islamic Nation" unless encouraged and instigated to do so by a political speech called "in Islam lies the solution."

Groups falling under the influence of this slogan try to deal with various crisis by using it.

Islamist influential groups hope to transform the slogan in the next stage into one saying "Solution lies with the Islamists."

It is at this next stage that these groups attempt to seize power. Yet, numerous religious people have not yet had their brains washed by the political groups as they still retain their normal feelings towards Nationalism.

At the same time, they are not doing harm to or opposing their own faith. It is on these people that we depend for reviving nationalist ideology to serve as a common denominator for all Arabs. Religion and Arabism are two factors within the Arab Nation. It is not in the interest of our nation to eradicate one in favour of the other. Otherwise we would be facing tragedies, further dismemberment and divisions, just like in the former Soviet Union.

### Correction

Due to an editorial mistake, Najwa Najjar-Kort's article "Israeli absence from Palestinian festival testifies to separate identities" (Jordan Times, May 13, 1993) should have had the last paragraph as a note reading: "The writer (Mrs. Najjar) has recently returned from Jerusalem and is currently working as a filmmaker in Amman," instead of "Mr. Kuttal, himself a writer, has..."

## Influence of Saudi rights group played down

By Youssef Azmeih  
Reuters

DUBAI — Saudi officials have dismissed as insignificant and ineffectual a group of six conservative religious figures who have openly challenged Saudi Arabia's ruling royal family over the sensitive issue of human rights.

The six conservative religious figures formed the first private, independent human rights pressure group in the puritanical Muslim country where the authority of the monarch remains divine.

Western diplomats in the region said although creation of the group could prove awkward, it would not have a marked effect

on Saudi Arabia's close alliance with the West.

"The alliance is strategic... We need their oil... They are a stable element in a volatile region... You should not expect any change in the short to medium term," said one senior diplomat.

The Saudi officials said the government saw the formation of the group as an act of disloyalty by an unrepresentative minority that did not pose a threat.

"They are all fanatics... They have no clout... What weight have they got in society," one senior official, who would not be named, said of the group led by a former head of Diwan Al Mazaalim, Saudi Arabia's equivalent of an ombudsman.

One of Saudi Arabia's senior princes, King Fahd's brother Prince Salman who is also governor of the capital Riyadh, summoned the group on Saturday to try to dissuade them but they insisted on carrying on, according to a participant.

Mohammad Abdallah Al Masari, son of the group's Secretary Sheikh Abdallah Al Masari, said in a telephone interview with Reuters on Tuesday the six founder members of the group saw themselves as a factor for stability in the kingdom and "not as subversives aiming to harm the state or to weaken it."

Mr. Masari attended Saturday's meeting with the six founders. They are a controversial preacher Sheikh Abdel Rahman Al Jibrine, a professor of Islamic theology, a senior lawyer, a Muslim activist who has preached in Sudan and Afghanistan, and a professor at a theological university who is also a leading writer and satirist former U.S. President George Bush in a poem widely circulated during the Gulf crisis.

Independent Saudi sources said although the six were prominent, they were not part of the religious establishment.

Sheikh Jibrine, a popular preacher, was a hardliner who branded members of Islam's junior Shiite sects as infidels, in effect sanctioning their judicial slaughter.

The sources said he had also made statements against Christians and Jews.

They said the establishment remained largely loyal to the throne and accepted the king not only as a secular ruler but also as religious leader of a country founded 60 years ago as a puritanical and strict Islamic state.

Mr. Masari said from Riyadh the formation of the group was triggered by the jailing of two Saudi preachers, Sheikh Mohammad Al Diyyan and Sheikh Mohammad Obaid Al Assiri.

Reports from the kingdom speak of a crackdown on preachers who have been attacking the alliance with the West, especially since Saudi Arabia allowed more than 500,000 mainly American troops to be based there during the 1990-91 Gulf war.

Some argued the presence of non-Muslims had sullied the holy land that hosts Islam's most sacred shrines in Mecca and Medina.

Mr. Masari admitted the religious establishment would disapprove of the group's activities.

Officials, who could not speak for the government until it reacted publicly to the group, were quick to point out the irony

## SPD risks long summer of hot divisive debate

By Tom Heneghan  
Reuters

BONN — In their search for a new standard-bearer, Germany's leaderless opposition Social Democrats (SPD) have opted for a risk many were eager to avoid — a long hot summer of political in-fighting before a decision is made.

Fear of the so-called "summer theatre," the annual mix of mini-scandals and blunders that fill the political dog days in Bonn, has hung like a heavy cloud over the disoriented party since former Chairman Bjorn Engholm quit last week after admitting he lied to an official inquiry six years ago.

An SPD squabbling its way through the summer would be a gift for a scandal-hungry press, and many members fear the party could end up in poor shape to start its campaign to unseat Chancellor Helmut Kohl in October 1994.

But despite marathon discussions Sunday and Monday, the SPD's ever-fractious factions could only agree to move forward a party congress from November to September.

The fast-moving debate within the main opposition party has actually complicated the search for a new leader as new names, including Oskar Lafontaine, the SPD's failed candidate in 1990, are thrown into the ring.

Two state premiers, Gerhard Schroeder of Lower Saxony and Rudolf Scharping from Rhineland-Palatinate, lead the pack in the race to become the SPD's chairman and its fifth designated candidate since Mr. Kohl took office in 1982.

The ambitious Schroeder, who stands to the left of Scharping, pressed so openly for a quick decision that he angered two groups in the party — middle-of-the-road Social Democrats and the Eastern Germans.

The party's other decision this week — to canvass all its 900,000 members before choosing a leader — aims to slow down Mr. Schroeder and give more time for the lesser-known Scharping to win more recognition around the country.

"It's a 'block Schroeder' strategy," Peter Struck, the SPD parliamentary whip, admitted in an unusual moment of blunt talk in the otherwise cautious shadow-boxing over the leadership.

Renate Schmidt, the Bavarian SPD leader interested in running for chancellor, was one of several leaders who warned against going into the unpredictable "summer theatre" period with a leadership struggle still open.

But she said Tuesday that practical considerations had intruded. "Because of our party laws, it is impossible to hold a party congress before the summer break."

The party also wants to organise some kind of consultation with its members, many of whom find party leaders out of touch with the problems that voters actually face.

A classic example is the debate over limiting immigration, opposed by SPD national leaders on ideological grounds but favoured by many of their colleagues who have to grapple with the problem in town halls, district councils and state assemblies.

A marathon strategy session Monday evening rejected the idea of an American-style primary poll to choose a new leader. But support for more dialogue with members was so strong that party manager Karlheinz Blessing was asked to work out a method of consulting them in the next few months.

Commentators have been withering in their criticism of the SPD for indulging in months of internal fighting rather than presenting a real alternative to Mr. Kohl's exhausted government.

"The headless SPD is now showing us what it can still do even when all else has failed — pay attention to itself," Berlin's Tagesspiegel newspaper wrote.

"The attempt to conjure up a leader out of the test tube of an opinion poll is nothing else than an admission of failure by the party leadership."

Amid all these problems, the party drew at least some consolation from a new opinion poll that showed their woes had not translated into more support for Mr. Kohl.

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Michael Jackson picks 3 awards

MONTE CARLO (AP) — Michael Jackson picked up three world music awards during a ceremony full of royal presenters. Prince Caroline awarded Luciano Pavarotti with an award for best classical artist, while Prince Albert and his sister, Princess Stephanie, honoured Jaccoson as best artist of his country, of the year and of his era. Tina Turner was given the lifetime achievement award and Eric Clapton was chosen as best British artist and best rock artist.

Invasion of pretty women causing a stir in Mexico

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Beauty pageants are hardly alien to Mexico, where virtually every Pueblo crowns a beauty queen sometime during the year. But this year, the Miss Universe pageant, with all its glitter, has come to Mexico City, and the show has become a crowd-stopper. Everywhere the women go, they have captivated residents talking. Many praise the contest, but others fear it promotes women as sex objects among Mexico's legendary machos. Pastel pink and green buses have been darting around Mexico City for days and were spotted bearing contestants to a photo shoot at a luxury hotel. The Miss Universe pageant is the biggest beauty contest of them all, a competition for a crown, scholarship and prizes that has attracted more than 85 national beauty queens. The finals will be broadcast on May 21 to hundreds of millions of viewers worldwide. The contest is about bathing suit competitions, talent competitions and fashion contests featuring national costumes and evening gowns. And it's something Mexicans can very well relate to. Virtually every corner in fiesta-crazy Mexico grows a beauty queen sometime during the year, whether it's a Miss Aguascalientes or a Miss Veracruz — usually on strength of beauty, charm and poise. When more than 20 Miss Universe contestants showed up last week in one town, Zacatecas, 20,000 people appeared, strewing carnations at their feet.

U.S. reassigns 6 navy officers on Tailhook

WASHINGTON (AP) — The navy has temporarily reassigned six senior-ranking officers to shore duty so they will be "readily available" to the admirals overseeing the service's disciplinary proceedings in the Tailhook incident. In a brief statement issued at the Pentagon, the navy said the action was taken at the request of Admiral J. Paul Reason, the three-star admiral in charge of following up on the Pentagon inspector general's report that recommended discipline for up to 140 officers in connection with the event. The six officers were not identified and the statement warned that the action does not necessarily indicate that any particular disciplinary action would take place against them. The inspection general's report, issued last month, found that 83 women and seven men were sexually assaulted at the 1991 Tailhook Aviators Convention in Las Vegas, and that dozens of officers lied in attempts to cover up their activities. The report also found a "long-term failure of leadership" had helped produce the atmosphere of "debauchery" at the convention. The Tailhook Organisation is named after the hook on the back of planes which enables them to land on aircraft carriers.

Man convicted in condom rape trial

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A man who claimed a woman's request that he wear a condom demonstrated her consent was convicted of raping the woman, drawing cheers in the courtroom. The eight-woman, four-man jury deliberated about two hours before returning the verdict against Joel Valdez, 28. During the three-day trial, Valdez argued that the woman agreed to have sex because she had asked him to use a condom. "She told me to do her favour. She told me to wear a condom, so I did," Valdez testified. "We were making love after that." But in sometimes tearful testimony, the 26-year-old woman said she pleaded with her knife-wielding attacker to wear a condom to protect her from AIDS. "I knew there wasn't much I could do to prevent what was going to happen," she said. "I thought maybe I could protect myself from dying from AIDS." A Travis County Grand Jury in September declined to indict Mr. Valdez, sparking community protests from women's groups and the victim, who denied her request for a condom meant she consented to sex. A second grand jury indicted Mr. Valdez in October. Several women spectators in the courtroom cheered when the verdict was read. The victim, who also watched the verdict being read, cried. Mr. Valdez showed no emotion.

Serb leaders meet in Belgrade as fighting rages around Brcko

SARAJEVO (AFP) — Serb leaders began a special meeting in Belgrade Friday to persuade the Bosnian Serbs to accept the Vance-Owen peace plan, as a new Serb offensive on Brcko in northern Bosnia posed a grave threat to the latest fragile ceasefire.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata meanwhile denounced "serious human rights violations" against Muslims in Croatian-controlled Bosnian zones, according to UNHCR spokesmen who said Croat forces were holding 2,000 people near Mostar in the south.

Major Barry Frewer, spokesman for the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Sarajevo, Friday described the Serb offensive on Brcko as an "extremely serious" violation.

He said fighting was continuing around Lipovac and southeast of Brcko, and added that UNPROFOR had "put forward a strong protest."

In Belgrade a special joint meeting of the parliaments of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Montenegro and Serb officials from Bosnia and Croatia opened at midday after a two-hour delay.

In a snub to Belgrade, the self-styled Bosnian Serb parliament has refused to participate in the meeting, and plans to go ahead with a referendum this weekend on the Vance-Owen plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Deputies from the Croatian Serbs "parliament" also refused to attend.

Only 370 deputies out of a predicted total of more than 700 are attending the meeting, which is merely consultative.

The U.N. has alerted to the latest Serb attack on the Brcko area early Thursday by Croatian Defence Council (HVO) forces in the north, according to Maj. Frewer who described the battle as "an offensive."

"I don't know from where it came. I don't know what precipitated it. We do know that there has been fighting in the past few days up there. We do know that they are trying to secure that northern corridor, but I can't say any more about their intentions," Maj. Frewer said.

U.N. military observers based in Tuzla were sent to the Brcko



Smoke billows from several buildings in the centre of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina (AFP photo)

area and reported that the Serb attackers were using artillery, mortars and multiple rocket launchers. But they could not confirm Bosnian Muslim reports that the Serbs were using tanks.

The Serb aim would be to widen a corridor across northern Bosnia-Herzegovina linking the Serb-controlled area of Banja Luka, in the northwest, with Serbia.

Sarajevo Radio said Serb forces launched a new infantry and artillery attack in the Brcko area early Friday, and that six were killed and 17 wounded on the Bosnian Muslim side since Thursday.

Separate clashes between Bosnian Croat and Muslim forces continued overnight and early Friday in the southern town of Mostar, but "at a reduced level," UNPROFOR reported.

A company of about 100 Spanish U.N. troops moved into the town Thursday to help nail down a ceasefire negotiated by political leaders Monday, a day after the Croats attacked Muslim positions in Mostar.

Maj. Frewer said Friday each time the Spanish troops tried to approach the front line their vehicles were shot at. "We have already lost 40 tyres," he said. Sarajevo Radio said the com-

mander of the Muslim-led Bosnian government forces, General Sefer Halilovic, went to Medjugorje south of Mostar in Croat-held territory Friday to hold talks with local Croat commanders.

In Paris, Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic strongly criticised European Community policy on Bosnia.

"It's not neutrality but complicity," he said.

Speaking after talks with French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, Mr. Silajdzic said 13 months of diplomatic activity had "resulted mostly in destruction and death in Bosnia-Herzegovina."

Unfortunately the EC is now helping this totalitarian fascist system in Belgrade to either kill or expel," he added.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel urged Croatian President Franjo Tudjman Friday to rein in Croat forces attacking Muslims in Bosnia or risk jeopardising Western support for his country.

Mr. Kinkel met Mr. Tudjman on behalf of the 12-member European Community after it threatened Croatia — which seeks closer ties with the EC — with punitive action unless Bosnian Croat aggression ceased. Zagreb has denied responsibility.

He was drowned in a union of 340 million EC citizens dominated by Germany and France.

"One result is certain on May 18. It will show that voters are out of step with politicians," said Hans Joergen Nielsen, an assistant professor of political science at Copenhagen University.

Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen says he will not call a new election if the result is a "no."

Ove Fich, the leader of the "yes" campaign for Mr. Rasmussen's Social Democratic Party, warned supporters against complacency despite the polls.

"I'm confident, but still we will work hard because I'm sure that during the weekend there will be surprises, like a mistake by somebody or new secret documents," he told Reuters. "You never know before the votes are counted."

Mr. Aspin said the main aim of the new programme would be to develop a new generation of weapons capable of shooting down short-range ballistic missiles — with a range of 1,000 to 2,000 kilometres — such as the Scud.

A secondary priority will be technology for shooting down long-range ballistic missiles. Mr. Aspin said the technology for this would be ground-based, but did not indicate whether space sensors would be used.

The experience of the Gulf War brought home the message that a different type of system is needed, Mr. Aspin said. At the same time, he added that the possibility of a surprise attack from the former Soviet republics "has receded to the vanishing point."

"These changes are possible because of the end of a battle that had raged in Washington for over a decade over the best way to avoid nuclear war," said Mr. Aspin. "The fate of Star Wars was sealed by the collapse of the Soviet Union."

Mr. Aspin said the programme will be renamed Ballistic Missile Defence Organisation, Mr. Aspin said.

The defence secretary will ask Congress for \$3.8 billion for the programme in 1994, a \$2.5-billion reduction from the proposal by former President George Bush.

Some \$30 billion has been spent on the programme over the last decade, but its importance diminished and its emphasis has already been changed as a result of the end of the cold war and the breakup of the former Soviet Union.

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Yeltsin looks to former Soviet neighbours for political allies

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin hunted Friday for new political allies among Russia's ex-Soviet neighbours as his battle to crush a hostile conservative legislature at home moves into a decisive phase.

On Friday morning, he held Kremlin talks with Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze on resolving a bloody separatist conflict in the west Georgian region of Abkhazia. Georgia accuses Russia of helping the separatists.

In the afternoon, he took part in a summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The 10 leaders will discuss Mr. Yeltsin's March plan to radically revamp the CIS and halt growing economic chaos.

But a Ukrainian delegate suggested the most pressing reason for the summit, unexpectedly moved forward two weeks from its scheduled end-of-May date, was to give Mr. Yeltsin public backing from neighbours before a new round of his domestic battle.

Both Mr. Shevardnadze and Abkhazian rebel leader Vladislav Ardzimba have said they expected little from the Georgian talks. Mr. Ardzimba Thursday rejected Mr. Shevardnadze's new proposal for Ukrainian peacekeepers to be patrol the rebel region.

Several hundred people have been killed in almost nine months of fighting since Abkhazian separatists, with support from Russian irregulars, launched a struggle for more autonomy.

But the talks will serve an important purpose for Mr. Yeltsin. They will shed flattering light on the image he wants to present

as a moderate peacemaker surrounded by aggressive conservatives.

Mr. Shevardnadze has said repeatedly he believes it is not Mr. Yeltsin, but Russian conservatives nostalgic for Soviet ways, who are helping the Abkhazian rebels on territory which is no longer theirs.

Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Shevardnadze agreed Friday to call for a ceasefire in Abkhazia from May 20.

Local news agencies quoted Mr. Shevardnadze as telling reporters after the Kremlin talks that the ceasefire would be followed by the withdrawal of heavy military equipment from the conflict zone and a ban on all flights in the region.

The two governments planned to sign a major treaty in mid-June including a package of bilateral agreements, Mr. Shevardnadze was quoted as saying.

He and other leaders of the former Soviet republics strongly backed Mr. Yeltsin in Russia's April 25 referendum campaign.

At home, Mr. Yeltsin is using his referendum win to move in for the kill against conservatives in parliament who have blocked the radical economic reforms he is trying to bring in.

Russia's parliament moved to ask the constitutional court to rule on whether Mr. Yeltsin was breaking the law in his current attempt to bypass the legislature and bring in a new constitution giving him more power and lawmakers less.

Mr. Yeltsin has called an assembly of Russian regional

leaders on June 5, to draft and perhaps adopt a new constitution without the lawmakers — whose job it is under the present constitution.

One of his key radical allies, Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Shakhrai, warned Friday that adopting a new constitution, or holding early elections to the parliament, was necessary if Russia were to avoid civil war.

But, in comments to the weekly Literaturnaya Gazeta, he advanced a new possible compromise in the power struggle between president and parliament.

Instead of rushing through a constitution, he suggested, an ordinary law could be adopted to settle the power-sharing argument between the legislative and executive branches.

A full constitution, which parliament has argued over for two years, could then be passed at leisure in the legislature's remaining two-year term.

Mr. Yeltsin got a boost from a different quarter when the president of powerful Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, Thursday threw his support behind the Russian leader's reform plan for the CIS.

Meanwhile a key Russian conservative leader backed Mr. Yeltsin's proposals for constitutional reform Friday, opening a split in the parliamentary opposition to the president.

Nikolai Ryabov, deputy to parliamentary Chairman Ruslan Khasbulatov, made his declaration to parliament in an unscheduled speech. He said if deputies reject Mr. Yeltsin's plan for a

Constitutional Assembly they would push society to confrontation.

Mr. Ryabov has been a key ally of Mr. Khasbulatov through a long power struggle between the parliamentary chairman and the president.

Mr. Khasbulatov tried to interrupt Mr. Ryabov several times during his short address.

"It is dangerous for the parliament to be dragged into anti-constitutional structures," Mr. Khasbulatov said at one point in a reference to the assembly, which Mr. Yeltsin is convening on June 5 to draft and, perhaps, to endorse a constitution.

Mr. Khasbulatov's intervention brought another longtime opponent of Mr. Yeltsin's economic reforms, Yevgeniy Sokolov, to his feet in Mr. Ryabov's support. "I would ask the chairman not to exert pressure on deputies," he said.

The Russian parliament decided Friday to ask the constitutional court to rule on the legality of President Yeltsin's attempt to bypass the legislature in bringing in a new constitution.

Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi Friday said President Yeltsin's camp was trying to consign him to political oblivion, but he would not give up the fight against them.

Mr. Rutskoi, whom Mr. Yeltsin has stripped of his main posts, his official Mercedes limousine and most of his staff and bodyguards, told the opposition daily Pravda he was spurned by Mr. Yeltsin soon after victory over a hardline coup in August 1991.

39 killed, 14 missing in S. African coal mine blast

SECUNDA, South Africa (R) — Rescuers searched through choking smoke and dust Friday for 14 coal miners missing in an underground explosion which killed at least 39.

Hopes were fading that the missing would be found alive. A spokesman for the mine at Secunda, 120 kilometres east of Johannesburg, said specialised rescue teams had recovered 39 bodies by midday Friday, nearly 24 hours after the methane gas blast about 100 metres underground.

Chances are very slight that anyone survived. We expect to recover more bodies as the teams go further into where the fire occurred," said Richard Hughes, spokesman for the oil-fuel-coal company Sasol Ltd.

Flags at the offices of the mine,

recipient this week of a National Safety Award, were at half-mast. The mood was sombre in Secunda, a mining town built up in the 1970s in the bleak, flat eastern Transvaal smog-belt.

Mr. Hughes said a government official had arrived at the scene to investigate the cause of the explosion at Middlebelt, one of three underground workings making up the Secunda Collieries complex owned by Sasol.

Unions said they were horrified at the blast, which occurred the same day five miners were killed in a rockfall at an Anglo American gold mine near Orkney, southwest of Johannesburg.

The unions said safety should be improved in South Africa's mines, where more than 600 men die each year.

Khmer Rouge leader: Poll leading to Cambodia war

BANGKOK (AFP) — Khmer Rouge leader Khieu Samphan, reiterating his group's total rejection of Cambodia's U.N.-organised election later this month, warned Friday it would provoke a resumption of war in the troubled South East Asian country.

Mr. Khieu Samphan went on the radical guerrilla group's clandestine radio to describe the May 23-28 polls as "a contemptible shadow play," aimed at legitimising the "Phnom Penh (government) puppets" of Vietnam.

"UNTAC's unfair election is in no way to lead to peace in Kampuchea (Cambodia) but it has been arranged in such a way that it will rekindle the flames of war in Kampuchea," he said in a broadcast monitored here.

Mr. Khieu Samphan, who is widely believed to be the faction's nominal leader acting on orders issued ultimately by shadowy former ruler Pol Pot, repeated Khmer Rouge accusations that Vietnamese forces were still deployed in Cambodia.

He called on all Cambodians to "resolutely oppose this unfair and contemptible UNTAC election."

UNTAC, the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia, has been mandated under Cambodia's 1991 peace treaty to lead the country to free and fair elections.

Pol Pot and his lieutenants

ruled Cambodia from April 1975 to January 1979, engineering a bloody socialist revolution in the small South East Asian country.

At least one million people died by execution or from starvation of exhaustion in Cambodia's "killing fields" during Pol Pot's reign of terror.

They were toppled following an invasion by Vietnam's armed forces, which installed in Phnom Penh a government dominated by Khmer Rouge defectors.

In September 1989, Hanoi announced a full withdrawal of its expeditionary corps. But the Khmer Rouge, then the military backbone of a guerrilla coalition fighting Phnom Penh, rejected this, alleging Vietnamese troops remained in Cambodia.

Mr. Khieu Samphan's tough talk against the election parallels a statement earlier this week by a Phnom Penh leader, who said his government, if it wins in the polls, will resume its fight against the Khmer Rouge.

Foreign Minister Hor Namhong told AFP: "We are prepared for combat because the partition of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge leaves us no other choice."

The guerrillas control militarily about 10 per cent of Cambodia's territory and up to 500,000 of its nine million population, and are believed to have infiltrated most of the country.

Italians must fight mafia infiltration, Ciampi says

ROME (Agencies) — Mafia infiltration of the economy is undermining Italy and must be attacked by business leaders and civil servants, Prime Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi said Friday, launching a campaign against organised crime.

He called on leaders in the Italian economy, and people in the public administration, to fight against mafia infiltration of the economic and financial system.

"The infiltration of organised crime" throughout the economy "is undermining international confidence in our country," he told a congress on mafia activities.

The conference had been organised by the anti-mafia commission of parliament in memory of Judges Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino one year after they were murdered by the mafia.

Mr. Ciampi, until recently the governor of the Bank of Italy, said that his appeal to Italians to reject the mafia has the first public stand of his new government and underlined the importance he gave to this "fundamental problem."

Italy had to tackle mafia infiltration sooner or later in order to retrieve credibility, and to head for healthy and lasting economic development which was free of any compromise with illegal activity.

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Estimates by the central statistical institute hold that the mafia's annual "business" activities turnover about 26,000 billion lire (\$16 billion), "employment" about 170,000 people and consequently would rank as about the fifth-biggest company in Italy, the Il Sole 24 Ore newspaper has reported.

Mafia penetration of the financial world is believed to be growing and about 60 per cent of mafia income is believed to be invested in the Italian financial system.

Mafia investment in other more traditional activities is believed to be falling to about 17 per cent in property, 11 per cent in commerce and four per cent in the food sector.

Meanwhile, the government of Mr. Ciampi has itself been drawn into the country's corruption scandal only two weeks after its formation.

Environment Minister Valdo Spini, a former under-secretary at the Foreign Ministry, was told Thursday that he was being investigated for alleged offences involving Italy's aid to Albania, State Television reported.

Mr. Spini, a Socialist, was the first of Mr. Ciampi's ministers to be warned of suspected involvement in corruption. But no fewer than five ministers in the previous government were forced out by country's 15-month bribery scandal.

Sanctuary concept approved by world whaling commission

KYOTO, Japan (AFP) — A resolution to endorse the concept of creating a Southern Ocean Sanctuary for whales was approved here Friday by the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

"I think the result is a very good result. The problem is the form it takes," said Chile's IWC Commissioner Fernando Zegers, a co-sponsor of the resolution along with Brazil, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland.

The resolution was a watered-down version of a stronger French proposal that would have actually established a southern Ocean Sanctuary, extending from Antarctica to 40 degrees south latitude.

The resolution was supported by a simple majority of 19 for, eight against and four abstentions.

It also "resolves to address outstanding legal, political, eco-

logical, geographical, management, financial and global environmental issues relating to such a sanctuary."

IWC scientists will meet next November in Australia in an inter-sessionary working group to deal with the issues.

Pro-whaling nations Japan and Norway received backing for their rejection of the resolution from the Caribbean states of Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines as well as South Korea and the Solomon Islands.

Supporting countries included Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Britain, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.

China, Russia, Seychelles and South Africa abstained.

U.K. tabloid press prints more royal bugging allegations

LONDON (Agencies) — A circulation war between the British tabloid newspapers, currently making the most of royal bugging allegations, continued Friday with a report that Duchess of York knew her home was bugged.

Allegations that the security services routinely bugged the royal family first surfaced in transcripts published Wednesday and Thursday by the Sun and the Mirror.

The Sun Friday reported that the Duke and Duchess of York told close friends: "We know we have been bugged."

The conversation has allegedly taped when Prince Andrew and his wife Sarah Ferguson, com-

monly known as "Fergie," were going through a rough patch in their six-year marriage.

The transcript of a telephone call, drawn from a forthcoming novel by a Sun photographer, shows the duchess keen to take a break to visit her mother in Argentina.

The Daily Express for its part reported that the now estranged Prince and Princess of Wales had their telephone conversations bugged by the security services after they started courting 12 years ago.

In one taped call, made before the couple wed in 1981, they joke about their future. Prince Charles suggests that in a few years' time Princess Diana might be glad to

get rid of him.

"When Princess Diana replies 'never,' Prince Charles responds ironically: 'It will remind you of that in 10 years' time.' The couple are now separated.

The paper, which draws its material from another book, The Tarnished Crown by royal watcher Anthony Holden, alleges the British security services have transcripts of intimate calls dating back to 1981.

The rival Daily Mirror alleged that Princess Diana's late father, the eighth Earl Spencer, beat his first wife, and may have been the cause of Princess Diana's much-reported eating disorders.

All the revelations come from books serialised by the papers.

MPs have called on the government to launch an inquiry into the alleged bugging by the secret services, but this has so far been resisted by ministers who have consistently denied that the security services are involved.

The British government ruled out an official inquiry into allegations that the secret service eavesdropped on a blazing row between Prince Charles and Princess Diana, leaving Britons asking "who bugged the royals?"

Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke told parliament that, despite pressure from the opposition, an investigation into press allegations that MI5 was the culprit was as likely as one into whether the moon was made of

green cheese.

"You really are a tabloid politician, unable to turn your attention to any serious criminal matters at all," Mr. Clarke scoffed Thursday in response to a demand by the opposition Labour Party's Tony Blair for an "urgent investigation."

The government and the media have denied bugging the royals, but, unless the transcript is a fake, someone must have recorded it, suggestions included a maverick in the intelligence services, royal staff or even the royals themselves.

On Friday, for the third day running, some newspapers ran reams of so-called royal exclusives while others pondered over

whether the tape was valid. The editors involved insisted that their bugging allegations were true and not another skirmish in a circulation war among Britain's tabloid newspapers.

The Daily Mirror's royal writer, James Whitaker, said he would show in a new book that the royals were bugged regularly.

## 2nd Division Basketball Championship First round ends today

By a Jordan Times  
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The first round of the 1993 Second Division Basketball Championship, organised by the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF), comes to an end Saturday when former First Division teams, Homentmen and Al Abbasi, fight it out in a much awaited match by fans of both teams.

Nine teams are competing in the championship which is being played on a two-round basis. The top four teams will play a title-deciding second round at the Sports Palace Court starting Monday.

This season only the first place winner will be promoted to the First Division in 1994, while the last two teams in the overall standings — Al Mafrag and Anjarah — will be relegated to the Third Division.

Homentmen and Abbasi have already qualified for the second round after maintaining unbeaten records until now. Gazzet Hashem and Yarmouk Amman also qualified.

Al Karak were in competitive form and gave Al Abbasi a hard time before the latter scored a 4-point victory of 68-64. However they later seemed

to lose their momentum when Abu Nusair, a new team in the competition, scored a surprising victory defeating Al Karak at their home court 72-65. Abu Nusair lost hope of securing a second round qualifying berth after losing to Gazzet Hashem 48-47.

The Abbasi-Homentmen match, which was due to be played Monday May 10, had been postponed after Al Abbasi objected to the outmoded and tilted, improper basketball board and ring at the JBF court.

Both Homentmen and Al

Abbasi seem to be the only two teams capable of returning to the First Division. However, the JBF's new regulations for the 1993 competitions — stating the promotion of only one team — mean both teams will give it all they have in the second round to secure the championship title.

Homentmen had scored impressive victories of 91-21 over Al Mafrag, 70-38 over Yarmouk Amman, and 83-37 over Al Husun. Al Abbasi on the other hand, beat Abu Nusair 73-48, Al Karak 68-64 and Gazzet Hashem 69-41.

### STANDINGS

	P	W	L	SF	SA	Pts
Homentmen	7	7	—	550	251	14
Abbasi	7	7	—	455	264	14
Gazzet Hashem	8	6	2	490	405	14
Yarmouk Amman	8	4	4	457	428	12
Abu Nusair	8	4	4	478	439	12
Karak	8	3	5	525	427	11
Husun	8	2	6	304	523	10
Mafrag*	8	1	7	305	584	9
Anjarah*	8	1	7	410	502	8

\* Homentmen-Abbasi have a postponed match

\* Relegated to third division

## Becker's flaws exposed by Chesnokov

ROME (R) — Russian Andrei Chesnokov gave Boris Becker a lesson in clay court tennis Thursday when he dumped the third-seeded German out of the \$1.75 million Italian Open.

But Becker showed continued signs of improvement in the clay court game and later described the tournament as his best event on the slow surface this year.

Chesnokov, who was asked to enter the tournament only last Sunday after Andre Agassi's late withdrawal, won a 2½-hour epic 6-2, 3-6, 7-6.

He displayed the form which took him to the final in Hamburg against Michael Stich last week and his quarter-final against sixth seed Michael Chang Friday will be his 10th match in 11 days.

Becker, who had plastered over the cracks in his game with convincing wins in the first two rounds, blamed an errant forehand and an inspired opponent for his defeat.

"He's an excellent player on this surface and he kept the ball deep on all the important points," Becker said. "I moved well and played good volleys but I don't remember when I played forehands like that, ever."

The three-times Wimbledon champion had two break points in each of the seventh and 11th games in the final set, but smashed forehands long or wide each time.

"Right now I feel disappointed with the result but later I'll realise



A defeated Boris Becker gestures after surprisingly losing his match to Russian Andrei Chesnokov at the Italian Open (AFP photo)

that this was my best clay-court tournament this year," he said. Becker was leading the first set 2-1 when England and Lazio soccer star Paul Gascoigne arrived in his VIP box to a raucous reception. The match was held up for almost a minute until the cheering booing from rival fans died down.

Becker lost the next five games in a row to surrender the set 6-2. "It didn't affect me — that sort of thing has happened before when famous actors and celebrities have arrived," he said.

"Chesnokov, world-ranked 33rd, said he felt drained by his recent schedule but was perfectly calm during the final set tie-break which he won 7-3.

"It wasn't Boris's best game," Chesnokov said. "He missed a lot of shots but Boris is Boris and is always an adversary to fear."

Earlier, Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia beat his close friend and sometimes-doubles partner, Swiss Marc Rosset, 6-4, 6-3 to move into the last eight. Ivanisevic meets Uruguayan

Marcelo Filippini, conqueror of Ivan Lendl in the first round, in the quarter-finals.

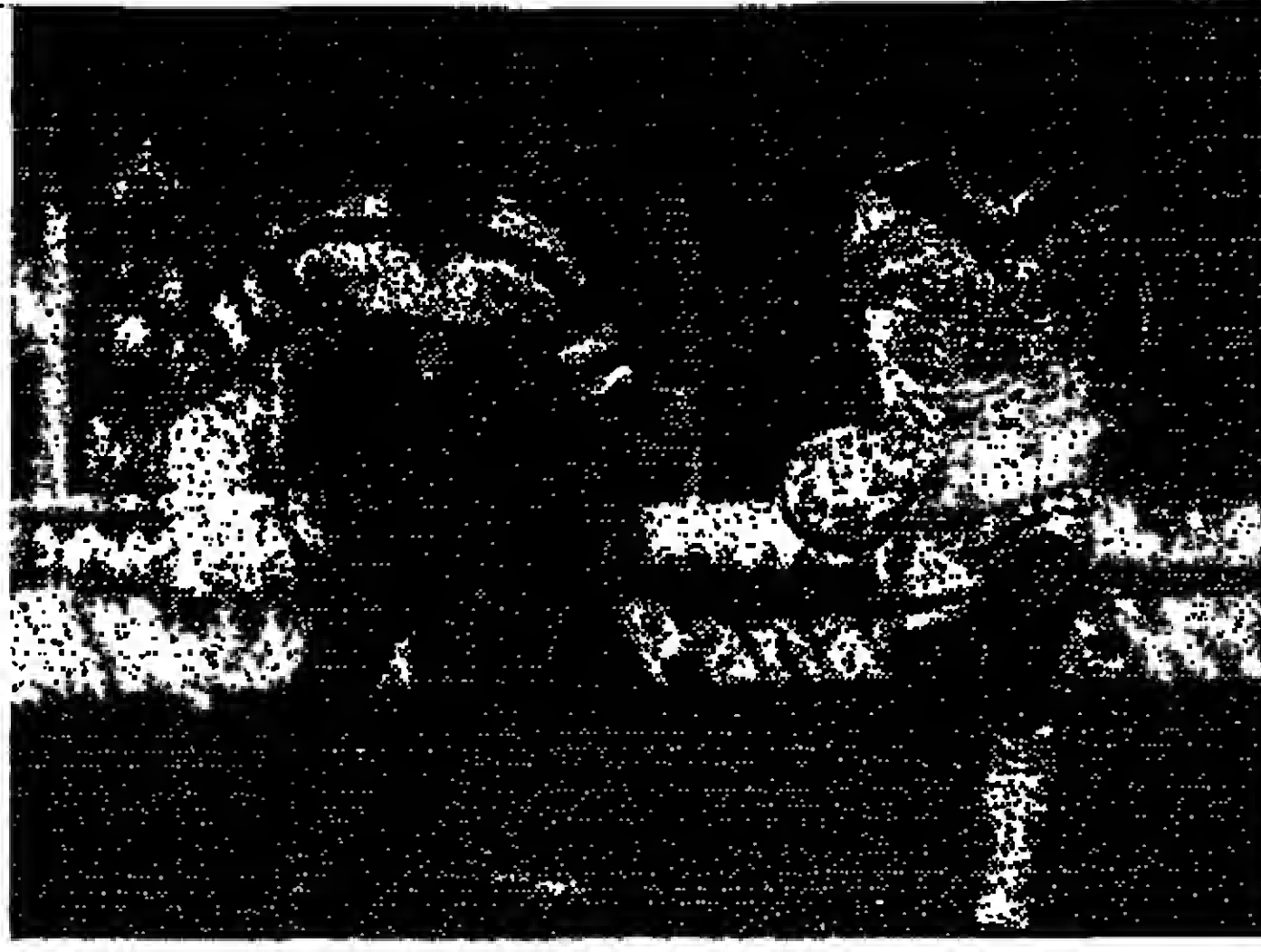
The Croatian and number one seed Pete Sampras are the only seeded players left in the top half of the draw and one of them seems certain to contest Sunday's final.

Sampras had no trouble beating Swede Christian Bergstrom 6-1, 6-4 in the night match and was to meet Argentine Guillermo Perez-Roldan in a quarter-final Friday evening.

Sampras and seventh-seed Sergi Bruguera of Spain, who beat Karel Novacek of the Czech Republic, are the only two quarter-finalists not to drop a set.

Second seed Jim Courier was unhappy with his form in a 6-3, 6-3 win over 16th-seeded Frenchman Fabrice Santoro and headed straight for the practice courts afterwards.

Masur celebrates 30th birthday with three-set victory: In Coral Springs, Florida, top-seeded Wally Masur of Australia had an on-court birthday bash on Thursday as he beat Gilbert Schaller of Austria 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 in the second round of the America's Red Clay Tennis Championship.



Bahrain striker Khamis Eid (right) and Lebanese defender Ibrahim Hosni duel for the ball during their World Cup qualifying match (AFP photo)

## Lebanon fail to score win; South Korea keep lead

BEIRUT (R) — Winless Lebanon and Bahrain battled to a goalless draw in their Group D match in Beirut to leave both well behind South Korea and Hong Kong, in their World Cup qualifying matches in Beirut.

Bahrain had most of the ball during the match but failed to transform their superiority into goals and had very few clear-cut chances.

Lebanon, urged on by a partisan crowd of 13,000 relied on counter-attacks and strikes Fadi Allouch and Wael Nazha both missed chances.

Lebanon have now completed their group matches and the first leg will be completed Saturday with a top-of-the-table clash between South Korea and Hong Kong while Bahrain play India.

Lebanon's coach Berjaoui said he was not disappointed his team had not won a single game on home soil but added: "We still hope to improve in the second round of matches in South Korea next month."

## Mansell gets to grips with Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS (AFP) — Formula One World Champion Nigel Mansell overcame his amazement and continued to improve Thursday on his second day of driving at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The Englishman clocked 224.372 mph (361.081 km/h) on his best lap on the 2.5 mile (4 km) oval, and had several laps above 220 mph.

Mansell, who jumped to IndyCar racing this season and promptly won his first race, admitted the circuit was intimidating.

"I've tried to come with an open mind to Indianapolis," he said. "It's very difficult because even from the air at about 5,000 feet when you fly about five miles away, you can see it."

"It is a very daunting, and, in your language, a very awesome place," he told American journalists asking his impression of the track.

"The facility here, I've never seen anything like it. I think all the Englishmen here, all the European press which have come across, will agree with me that there's nothing as mighty as it in the world," he said.

"The thing that goes through your mind at this circuit is to pay attention, to pay very serious attention," he added. "I've never been used to entering corners at these kinds of speeds anywhere. The quickest corner we'll ever have in Grand Prix racing is 190 (mph) — 306 km/h."



Lorenzo Minotti of Parma, Italy, holds the Cup Winners Cup trophy after Parma defeated Royal Antwerp of Belgium 3-1 (AFP photo)

## Al Maidan Basketball Tournament Ahli defeat Orthodoxi 90-71 to clinch title

By Aileen Bannayan  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's Al Ahli Friday clinched Al Maidan basketball tournament's trophy with an impressive 90-71 win over all-time rivals Al Orthodoxi.

The match, played at the Sports Palace court and attended by Minister of Youth Saleh Insheidat and around 3,000 basketball fans, was a clear indicator that Al Ahli are well on their way to capturing the Jordanian basketball championship title which, for the past decade, has been monopolised by Al Orthodoxi.

Al Orthodoxi only led at 9-8 in the first minutes of the match. From then on, Al Ahli tightened their defence, secured defensive rebounding and gradually began to expand the gap 17-11 and 23-13. Two consecutive three-pointers by Youssef Zaghloul gave Al Ahli a 29-20 lead.

Al Orthodoxi scored through Amjad Al Tanbour and Murad Barakat but could not catch up, as another three-pointer by Nasser Bushana and a score by Walid Badran ended the first half 40-29.

Al Ahli, whose coach has effectively changed their style and which depends mainly on a



Al Ahli's three-point expert Marwan Ma'touq

rotating lineup of players, continued to score by Marwan Ma'touq and Badran who gave their team a 49-38 lead before teammate Mohammad Al Shamsi scored six consecutive

points. Al Orthodoxi, mainly depending on the Barakat brothers, Murad and Hisham, seemed helpless as their coach and captain Murad Barakat tried to guide his team and abort his opponents' schemes. Ziad Al Nabulsi and Tanbour scored as Al Ahli still led 60-51 with 11 minutes remaining.

Meanwhile, Al Orthodoxi's players were hampered by many fouls, which in their case was a heavy disadvantage, as the team seemed to lack effective substitutes and primarily depended on the experience of their elder players.

Al Ahli intercepted many loose balls and converted them to fast attacks which secured their win by expanding the lead from 68-57 to 78-57 after a three-pointer by Zaghloul with five minutes remaining.

At Orthodoxi scored by Tanbour, Nabulsi and Jan Sahlieh and tried to apply a full-court defence. But it was already too late, as Al Ahli, supported by hundreds of chanting fans, celebrated their win and continued to score by Murqus and Ma'touq, the three-point star of Al Ahli and the tournament.

Al Ahli led 90-69 before a last minute score by Al Orthodoxi ended the match 90-71.

## Bulls crush Cavaliers

CHICAGO (AP) — Horace Grant scored 20 points and Scottie Pippen 19 as Michael Jordan, nursing an injured wrist, turned things over to his "supporting cast" Thursday night in the Chicago Bulls' 104-85 victory over the visiting Cleveland Cavaliers.

Jordan, who shot his last free throw of the third period left-handed and sat out the fourth quarter because of a slightly sprained right wrist, had 18 points as the Bulls took a 2-0 lead in a best-of-7 Eastern Conference playoff series.

The scene shifts to the Richfield Coliseum for games Saturday and Monday. If a fifth is needed, the series would return to Chicago stadium next Wednesday night.

B.J. Armstrong added 14 points for the Bulls.

The Cavaliers were led by Larry Nance with 16. Craig Ehlo had 15 and Mark Price 13.

Suns 109, Spurs 103

Charles Barkley's personal shoot-around paid off in Phoenix. After hitting 5 of 21 shots in the first game of the San Antonio Phoenix Western Conference semifinal, Barkley spent 20 minutes on the Suns' practice court.

The results of the extra work showed Thursday night. He made 12 of 18 shots in a 35-point performance which sparked a 109-103 victory and sent the Suns on to San Antonio with a 2-0 lead in the best-of-7 series.

Barkley sat out the first 8½ minutes of the fourth quarter, and the Suns opened a 94-78 lead without him.



President of the International Olympic Committee, Juan Antonio Samaranch waves to the media as he arrived at Sydney Airport Friday. Samaranch will inspect Sydney's facilities in his bid to host the Olympic Games in the year 2000 (AFP photo)

## IOC praises Sydney's 2000 Olympic bid

SYDNEY (AP) — IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch began a three-day visit to Sydney Friday acknowledging that its bid to host the 2000 Olympics games may be hard to beat.

Sydney is competing against Beijing, Manchester, Istanbul, Berlin and Brasilia for the right to stage the games.

The IOC will decide its choice in Monaco Sept. 23.

"If you ask me what is my impression ... I have to say that, as president of the IOC, all the six bidders are on the same starting line," Samaranch told a civic reception.

"But after the start, maybe (one of them) will be faster than the others. And I think that the Sydney bid could be, and will be, very, very fast."

His tour of Australia's oldest

and most populous city will include meeting Prime Minister Paul Keating Saturday. He will also inspect existing facilities as well as those under construction. Samaranch will view the proposed main site of the games by helicopter.

The visit follows a similar tour by Samaranch in Beijing, which is regarded by Sydney's bid organisers as its main rival.

Sydney bid chief Rod McGeough said Samaranch's visit, which ends Sunday, will be "low-key," compared with the pomp and ceremony he received in China, where he was also guest of honour at an elaborate opening of the East Asian Games in Shanghai earlier this week.

Beijing's bid has been criticised in the Australian media because of China's human rights record.

### GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF  
& TAMARA HIRSCH  
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#### CHECK YOUR ENTRIES

Both vulnerable. South deals.

**NORTH**  
♦ J 10 3  
♥ A 7 4  
♦ 7 5 2  
♠ A 7 5 2  
**WEST**  
♦ Q 7 6 4 2  
♥ A 5  
♦ Q J 9  
♠ 4 3  
♦ Q 10 9  
**EAST**  
♦ A 5  
♥ 10 8 5 2  
♦ K 9 8 6  
♠ J 8 4

**SOUTH**  
♦ K 8  
♥ K 6 3  
♦ A Q J 10  
♠ K 6 3

The bidding:  
South West North East  
1 NT Pass 3 NT Pass  
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♠

If there is a key element in planning the play of the hand, it can be expressed in one word: Count. You would be surprised how often counting your tricks can point the way to the winning line.

North's raise to game was optimistic by any standards. With a flat hand and little in the way of inter-

mediate cards to give the hand body, a raise to two no trump would have been ample by our standards.

West led a low spade, dummy's three was played and, when East produced the ace, declarer could count six fast tricks. The obvious place to find the three others was in diamonds, provided the king was well placed. However, to land four tricks in diamonds declarer might need to finesse three times. Finding East with the king singleton, doubleton or tripleton was not an odds-on prospect.

Two entries were in dummy in the rounded-suit aces. From where was the third going to come?

Uncovering the problem made the solution easy to spot. Declarer dropped the king of spades under the ace! Dummy's J 10 of spades assured another entry regardless of which defender held the queen.

East could do no better than continue with spades. With the diamond king favorably located, declarer had no trouble raking in nine tricks. And it was all done without mirrors—or even computers.

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# COLUMN

## Early Elvis guitar to go on sale in London

LONDON (R) — One of Elvis Presley's first guitars was expected to fetch more than £100,000 (\$150,000) at an auction on London Friday, auctioneers on Christie's said. A spokesman for the firm said the D-18 Martin acoustic guitar had extensive documentation to prove it was used by Presley on many of his earliest recordings, including "That's All Right Mama" in 1954. In 1956, just after he left the Sun Record label for RCA, he traded in the guitar at the OK Houck Piano Company in Memphis and a fan bought it and kept it for 35 years. It was displayed at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville until 1991. It was then bought at auction by a British collector. Christie's is billing it as "the guitar which turned Elvis Presley into the king of rock and roll." The instrument is the star lot at a sale that also features a floppy hat and boots owned by John Lennon and other Beatles items, a collection of James Brown memorabilia and a full set of stage costumes worn by 1970s heavy metal band Kiss. U.S. auctioneers Odyssey Auctions said that several collections of rare or unreleased Presley recordings would be sold by Joe Esposito, a former associate of the singer, in Beverly Hills, California, this Sunday. They feature 30 songs including "Johnny B. Goode," "That's All Right Mama," "I Got a Woman" and "Memories."

## Columbia Pictures ponders tunnel disaster film

LONDON (R) — One of Hollywood's biggest film makers is working on a disaster movie about the tunnel linking Britain and France before it has even opened, to the dismay of the tunnel's operators. In Los Angeles, Columbia Pictures confirmed it had signed up double Oscar winning actress Jodie Foster for the film. A Columbia spokeswoman in London said Tuesday a tunnel disaster movie provisionally titled "Trackdown" was "a project in development." "We have the script and it may or may not become a movie. During my years in the film business I've seen more projects fail than make it to the screen," she added. The lead character is Trackdown, an engineer who tries to prevent a train disaster in the undersea rail link between southeast England and northeastern France. The script was written by two university students. Eurotunnel, the company that will operate the tunnel due to open next year, said it had not been approached about the film. "Bad publicity like this could be extremely damaging. We are hoping to be open by this time next year and we are trying to invite people to have faith in the tunnel and how it will work," said a Eurotunnel spokeswoman.

## German farm rents out world's first cockerel alarm

BERLIN (AFP) — A Berlin smallholder has launched the world's first rent-a-cockerel service, in which stay-at-home cockerels are sent out to wake up their owners in the morning. The "eco-alarm" range from two-year-old Hansi, a dwarf cockerel with a dulcet tenor, to one-year-old Radauchen, a feisty German country cock whose ear-busting shriek "is enough to get the deepest sleeper off the mattress," the paper said. For those who like a lie-in, Paule, a three-year-old cockerel from Japan, is a good bet. He utters a little peep at four o'clock and then cries only once every 30 minutes, says Eddi Rasmussen, 52, who came up with the idea.

## Japanese travellers spend record \$35b abroad in 1992

TOKYO (AFP) — An all-time high number of Japanese spent a record \$35.4 billion on their overseas trips in 1992, the government's annual report on tourism said. The number of Japanese tourists who visited foreign countries, 11 million, was up 1.16 million from 1991, when overseas travel fell for the first time in 11 years due to the Gulf war. The most favoured destination among Japanese travellers was the United States with 3.77 million, followed by South Korea with 1.4 million and Hong Kong with 1.32 million, the report said. Meanwhile, the number of foreign travellers to Japan also marked an all-time high of 3.58 million, up 50,000. The largest group of foreign visitors to Japan was from neighbouring South Korea, with 860,000, followed by 715,000 from Taiwan.

## Fighting rages in Kabul

KABUL (Agencies) — Afghan troops engaged guerrilla foes in street battles and artillery exchanges that forced Kabul's airport and mosques to close Friday, and hospitals reported hundreds more casualties. Streets were deserted as the fighting edged closer to the centre of the city from the main battlefront in the western suburbs, a sign that government forces may be falling back under a fierce rocket and artillery onslaught. The fierce fighting that has caused more than 1,000 casualties in two days died down overnight only to resume soon after dawn Friday.

Heavy artillery fire thundered across the shell-shattered capital and machinegun fire echoed in empty streets. One hospital admitted 140 injured and 15 dead Friday. State-run Kabul Radio reported 54 deaths, many of them of women and children, on Thursday and 72 the day before. Doctors said the toll was certainly much higher, because few of the dead and few injured women are brought to hospitals. About 1,000 people have been wounded in two days of the fiercest battles since the fractious guerrilla leaders of the Islamic coalition government signed a peace pact in Pakistan in March to end months of fighting. Mosques were closed on the weekly holy day for prayers, and bazaars were shut.

"The airport has been closed for security reasons," said an officer patrolling near the shell-pocked runway. Bullets and rockets screamed overhead but it was unclear which of the various rival parties were involved. Civilians continued to bear the brunt of the fighting between government troops under Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masoud and two opposed factions. The battle began three days ago with the capture of Dehmad Square in southern Kabul, which came under a punishing rocket bombardment early Friday.

"More than 300 rockets have landed on us by my count," said one shell-shocked resident. Even as the area burst with rocket explosions, an elderly man and his son vainly tried to subdue the flames in three demolished houses by throwing bricks into the ruins, while a lone woman bent with age struggled to hand-pump water into buckets from a public well. The Hezb-e-Islami headed by ethnic Pashtun leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar sent several rockets onto the airport from missile batteries outside the city, forcing civilian flights to divert to the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif. Mr. Masoud has been trying to prise fighters of the Iranian-backed Hezb-e-Wahdat from their firmly entrenched positions in the south of the capital. Wahdat have joined sides with Mr. Hekmatyar's group in the fratricidal battles that have devastated Kabul.

Government troops have been bogged down in the south of Kabul after launching an attack against forces of two factions who have been maintaining a blockade of the city. Mr. Masoud's tanks cleared several bunkers of fighters from the Wahdat but his forces came under fierce attack from the group.



HOSTAGE DRAMA: A young boy is carried by his grandfather after being released by a hooded gunman who took some 30 children hostage at a kindergarten in the western Paris suburb of Nanterre-sur-Seine Thursday. The man, who was demanding 100 million French francs (\$18.5 million) as ransom, released 11 children by sundown Friday. The stand-off was continuing late Friday (AFP photo)

## CIS wants 'economic union'

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Commonwealth leaders signed a declaration Friday stating support for an "economic union" among the former Soviet republics, taking a step towards closer cooperation after a year of squabbling.

Nine of the 10 leaders of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) signed the declaration at the end of a one-day summit meeting in Moscow. The only member abstaining was Turkmenistan, which has balked at the idea.

"These are serious questions which concern the sovereignty of all nations," Russian President Boris Yeltsin told the leaders during a speech. "But if (you're) serious about economic integration, all this is necessary."

Although the economic union won support of most CIS leaders, it still could be ignored or gutted in the coming months, as other agreements have been. The declaration Friday only states an "intention" to set up an economic union and orders officials to draw up documents by July.

Mr. Yeltsin said economic union would require "serious commitments from member states."

"Economic union is unthinkable without an agreed strategy of economic reforms, without coordinating economic policy. Russia is ready to create a currency union as an indivisible part of an economic union," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin said work should be speeded up to create an interstate bank, as agreed at an earlier summit, and called for the setting up of a customs union. The latter would require coordinated price policies between member states.

It was not immediately clear what other leaders thought of these proposals. Effective cooperation between the 10 former Soviet republics that make up the CIS has been hampered since its inception in 1991 constant squabbling over policy.

Nonetheless, the document was the most hopeful sign in months for the future of the Commonwealth, which has been hobbled by infighting and empty promises since it was founded in December 1991 as the successor to the Soviet Union.

Russia's blueprints for the economic union included unified customs agencies, a banking union to organise a joint monetary system and oversee financial and credit

policy, a foreign trade union and steps to coordinate national legislations.

Mr. Yeltsin told his counterparts Friday that each member of the economic union would have to implement a concrete privatisation plan. He said members also would have to settle debts to Russia.

Earlier Friday, the Russian president acknowledged concerns about the commonwealth's future. But he argued that "almost all (commonwealth) countries now support closer forms of economy, cooperation and economic union."

Mr. Yeltsin claimed the realisation was "a kind of turning point in the life of our commonwealth."

Mr. Yeltsin said commonwealth members must be ready to create "a unified economic space, unified economic norms and coordination of our actions," including a stronger collective security system.

"An economic union in the modern sense of the word is impossible without close cooperation in other fields, Mr. Yeltsin said.

## Algeria will return to democracy — minister

By Saad Silawi  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Algerian Minister of National Education Ahmad Jabbar has reaffirmed his government's intention to restore democratic life in the country.

In an interview with the Jordan Times and Al Ra'i, Mr. Jabbar noted that Algerian Head of State Ali Kafi had announced a series of political measures on the road of restoring democracy.

"The measures include the broadening of the national consultative council and a public referendum on the form of government in preparation for the gradual restoration of democratic life," Mr. Jabbar said.

The minister stressed that the situation in Algeria was "improving on all fronts, particularly on the security front."

"Dialogue between the government and the Algerian political parties, including the opposition, has succeeded in its initial stage," he said, voicing hope that the second round of dialogue will be launched in the next two weeks.

The dialogue followed a wave of violence which erupted in 1992 in different parts of Algeria after the cancellation of the legislative elections and the announcement by the dominant Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which maintains close relations with Iran, that it was planning to change the country's constitution.

The FIS won the majority of votes in the elections benefiting from the mosques pulpits which it used to attack the government and its failure to remedy the economic situation and address foreign debts.

After the elections, the FIS announced its plans to change the constitution of the country saying that the Koran was the country's constitution. The FIS also said it was the party of God while all other parties were evil.

It claimed that democracy was a futile Western art of infidelity. Those announcements prompted Khalid Nizar, minister of defence, to order the armed forces to take to the street and arrest leaders of the front, including Abbas Madani and Ali

Balhaj, both extremist fundamentalists who maintain close relations with Iran.

The chain of events forced President Chadli Benjedid to resign his post, thus giving the army and the then Prime Minister Sayyid Ahmad Ghozali a justification to accuse him of collaborating with the Islamists and to assume power in the country.

President Benjedid was placed under house arrest in his hometown of Wahran, the second biggest city in Algeria. One of the revolution's veteran leaders, Ahmad Bouidif, who was exiled for 25 years because of his liberal ideas, was called to assume power. But Mr. Bouidif was assassinated by one of his bodyguards last year.

## The choices for electoral reform

(Continued from page 1)

society to be represented in the House and is not aiming for imposing its political programme on the country through the House.

"The application of Islamic Sharia cannot be implemented through the House or through the government. It requires a comprehensive and gradual social change that will take time to occur," he said.

"When that process is completed, society will change itself by itself and adopt the tenets of Islam."

This argument, according to some analysts, is rendered questionable by the many attempts by the Brotherhood deputies to amend laws in accordance with Islamic Sharia, such as amending the youth law to segregate sexes at sports clubs, the push for segregating schools and banning alcohol, among other things.

Even though the Brotherhood believes that there is a need for changing some provisions in the Election Law to ensure fair representation of all sectors of society, Dr. Sa'id said, the mechanism of change should be constitutional.

That, he added, could only be done through a permanent law that would be endorsed by Parliament. Changing the law through a temporary law would be considered unconstitutional by the Brotherhood.

"Any decision to change the law outside of Parliament would be a blow to the whole democratic process, a naked aggression on the House," Dr. Sa'id insisted.

"There are faults in the (Election) Law and we want to redress them. But that should not be done through the issuance of a temporary law."

A mechanism for change that seems to be winning

favour with the majority of Jordan's political groups is the formation of a special committee representing all shades of Jordan's political spectrum and entrusting it with the process.

But the Brotherhood, says Dr. Sa'id, rejects this mechanism because there will be questions on who decides on its membership and guarantees that all groups are fairly represented in it.

Only through the House would electoral reform be accepted by the Brotherhood, he continued.

"Despite the shortcomings of the Lower House, it is the most suitable place for discussing the change."

## Jordan reports no progress

(Continued from page 1)

more concrete than peace." "We are not interested in the five-word formula, we are interested in the five-line elaboration of what it is that enters into the Syrian definition of peace," he said.

Israel and Lebanon also appear to have reached an impasse, having presented each other with documents but failing to resolve their essential difference: Lebanon wants Israel to withdraw unconditionally from a region of southern Lebanon it has held since 1982. Israel wants to keep its soldiers there until it can work out an arrangement with Lebanon that would ensure the area is not used by guerrillas to launch the attacks against its northern border.

Lebanon suggested Thursday that if Israel was serious about a Middle East settlement based on "land for peace," it could make a truce withdrawal from South Lebanon.

Chief Lebanese negotiator Sobeil Chamas told a news conference: "If we're serious about this peace process, we think a testing ground could be Lebanon. An Israeli action and the action of withdrawal first would augur well," he said.

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## Palestinians reject American proposal

(Continued from page 1)

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said Friday the U.S. intervention into the peace talks was plotted in advance with Israel and "sprung on us a bit late."

With the talks now adjourned, Dr. Ashrawi mixed criticism of the United States and of Israel at a news conference in which she described the talks as "a let-down."

She said Arab foreign ministers would decide soon whether to continue the negotiations, which were begun in October 1991.

The talks did not produce agreement on limited self-rule for the Palestinians who live on the Israeli-held West Bank and Gaza. Nor did Israel and three Arab states, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, come to terms over their conflicts.

The round was marked by an attempt by the State Department to reconcile differences between Israel and the Palestinians on a "statement of principles" to govern future negotiations.

The Palestinians did not show up for the session Wednesday night. "It was sprung on us a bit late," Dr. Ashrawi said.

The conference condemned the continued Arab embargo on Libya saying that the use by the United States and its allies of "international legitimacy as an umbrella to put more pressure on Arab countries is a flagrant violation of national sovereignty and an expression of the double standards followed by the U.S. and its allies."

The conference noted with "deep regret the deteriorating situation in Somalia caused by the civil strife and tribal fighting and called on all Arab countries and intellectuals to exert every possible effort to achieve reconciliation among the warring parties in the country."

The proposed order has been broadened to include interna-

## Speculators refuse to give up hopes on Iraqi 'Swiss' notes

By P.V. Vivekanand  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Speculators are continuing to buy up invalidated Iraqi currency in the Jordanian market with hopes that the door has not been fully slammed against realising good profits.

Dealers said the buyers were betting on their connections either in Baghdad or in Kurdish-controlled territory in northern Iraq to convert the 25-dinar Iraqi "Swiss notes," which were withdrawn from circulation by the Iraqi government last week.

At least 25 million Iraqi dinars in the Swiss notes changed hands in the Jordanian market at around 475 to every 100,000 Iraqi dinars since Monday, the deadline set by Baghdad for the exchange of the currency in state-run banks within the country, market sources said.

A six-day border closure supported by increased frontier patrols to check smuggling had deprived speculators of the chance to take advantage of the exchange arrangement.

By all estimates, Jordanians held between two and five per cent of the "Swiss" notes in

circulation — believed to have been of a total volume of 25 billion Iraqi dinars, with the bulk of it in the hands of dealers and governments in the Gulf states.

"Apparently some speculators in Jordan are hoping that they could use their connections with high places in Iraq to help them exchange the Swiss notes and hence the buying spree since Monday," said a dealer, who preferred anonymity.

"At least that is what is being said in town, although no one seems to know anything more than that," the dealer said.

Suggestions in the market that the Iraqi embassy in Amman was involved in the operation were flatly denied by the mission.

"At no point in time was the embassy buying Iraqi currency or cooperating with anyone who did," said a senior official at the embassy in exchange for anonymity. "It is not our business to do so."

The Iraqi government has been cool to a Jordanian request that Jordanians be compensated for their losses caused by the withdrawal of

the once-premium-priced "Swiss notes." But efforts to get the Iraqis to compensate Jordanians are continuing, according to informed sources.

Another explanation to the continued demand for the "Swiss" bill was provided by economist and columnist Fahed Fanek.

"In many cases, prior to the invalidation of the currency, speculators opted to keep their holdings of Iraqi dinars with the moneychangers," Dr. Fanek said. "Many of the moneychangers sold part of the holdings when the prices were high without informing their actual owners."

"Now the moneychangers are buying in the market so that they can fulfill their obligation of having to return the banknotes to their owners."

Yet another scenario was painted by dealers and businessmen, who said they detected two distinct trends in the market: One to buy "Swiss" notes bearing a photo of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and the other for the same, British-printed, notes carrying a photo of an Arab stallion.

They said the notes with the Saddam photos could be the focus of those who hope to use their influence in Baghdad to get compensation, while the bills which carry the photo of horse could be destined for northern Iraqi territory under the control of rebel Kurds.

"Some speculators are hoping to move the bills to the Kurds with hopes that they could be compensated by the U.N.," said a dealer at a commercial bank which does not include Iraqi dinars in its dealings but keeps a close watch on market movements.

Excluded in last week's Iraqi exchange arrangement for the currency was the rebel-controlled northern zone, where only the "Swiss" notes were in circulation since the separatist Kurds in the area refused to use the "askari" notes printed by the Iraqi government during and after the Gulf crisis which was sparked by the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The Kurds have appealed to the United Nations for help in the currency crisis, and speculators seem to be betting that the world body might oblige with some form of compensa-

tion for the invalidated banknotes.

No signs of such a U.N. move have appeared so far, and the world body has not made any public comment on the issue. But the Kurds have made an inventory, including the serial numbers of the "Swiss" notes in their territory, in anticipation of U.N. intervention to help them.

No definite figures have been released on the volume of the currency held by the Kurds, but reports speak of serious confusion among the residents of the area, which is under the protection of the American-led allies which fought Iraq in the war over Kuwait.

Several problems face speculators in Jordan who might be hoping to get their board of "Swiss" notes to northern Iraq to add to the Kurds' holdings expecting U.N. compensation — that is, if they get cooperation from the Kurds, who have reportedly already turned away Iraqis appearing at their doorstep with truckloads of "Swiss" notes last week.

But the first hurdle is to get the currency out of Jordan.

"The question remains open," said a moneychanger. "It all depends on how the Central Bank of Jordan will look at the issue: Whether it will grant permission for the currency to be taken out of Jordan."

No CBJ official was immediately available for comment. Dr. Fanek, the economist, said the idea was plausible, but pointed out the use by the United States and its allies of "international legitimacy as an umbrella to put more pressure on Arab countries is a flagrant violation of national sovereignty and an expression of the double standards followed by the U.S. and its allies."

The conference noted with "deep regret the deteriorating situation in Somalia caused by the civil strife and tribal fighting and called on all Arab countries and intellectuals to exert every possible effort to achieve reconciliation among the warring parties in the country."

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